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THE WORLD GOSPEL SERIES

Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all,
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold,
Rend each man's temple veil and let it fall
That we may know that Thou hast been of old
Gather us in, we worship only Thee,
In varied names we stretch a common hand,
In diverse forms a common Soul we see,
In many ships we seek one spirit-land
Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light,
Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven,
Thou art the Fullness of our partial sight—
We are not perfect till we find the seven

G Matheson

Apart from a few scholars and devotees, the modern public are unwilling to spend time on reading through the whole of the lengthy Scriptures of the world This little Series is planned to offer them in a cheap, handy and attractive form the essence of each of the world's great Scriptures, translated and edited by one who has a deep and living sympathy for each of them [1]

[1] It is however obvious that the writer does not thereby pronounce his own personal convictions

It is based on the inevitable conclusion of any fair student that all the great Religions and their Scriptures come from the one Divine Source, in varying degrees of purity of transmission, and according to the needs and capacities of those to whom they came--the authentic Word of God to man

It is hoped that the Series will form a useful little reference library of the world's religious literature which has done so much to mould the thought and culture of today, even though few individuals in each of the communities have perhaps been able to reach the ideal laid down in their holy books

DUNCAN GREENLEES

THE GOSPEL OF THE GURU-GRANTH SAHIB

SIKHISM is the religion taught through Guru Nanak in the forms of the Ten Gurus and now through the Guru-Granth Sahib and the whole community of disciples. It is a practical way of life, leading man straight to his goal, and does not involve itself in verbose theorising.

There is one God, absolute, eternal, infinite, beyond all human comprehension, yet revealed through creation and through grace to one prepared by the practice of devotion and the virtues This God never limits Himself to one form by taking birth, but sends His messages from time to time to lead His creatures towards Him.

God alone is of Himself altogether true, eternally real; His whole creation is real only because He pervades it and can be found through it; in the absolute sense creation is

like a dream which arises from and eventually disappears again into His infinite Person. As no final happiness can be found in perishable things, God's creatures reach their end only by a sought union with that eternal Lord from whom they came Snared in the world of change, which should have been a playground and has become a prison, caught up in a wearisome round of births and deaths resulting from its own act in identifying the self with its physical body and environment—the creature can be freed and admitted into that union with God only by a whole-hearted choice of Him as the guiding will of its life Regarding worldly things as shadows, the aspirant gives his whole life to God and thereafter looks on himself merely as His instrument or servant, relying on Him at every moment for guidance and strength.

Such a life is possible only when the soul is thoroughly disillusioned by the instability of other things and filled with intense longing for the Eternal. Made ready in this way by the supreme virtue of surrender, she receives God's grace in the society of a saintly teacher, the Guru She is now able to realise God as ever

present with and in her and to pass every moment in harmony with His known will This blessed soul is then called to the inner chambers of the heart where, through the mystic way, she is perfectly made one with God her One Beloved, and thenceforth lives the Life Divine on earth and in the inner planes

To tread this path there is no need to "renounce the world" or to adopt the robes or way of life of the ascetic God pervades the whole world, including man's homes, He is in the heart itself, and can be found equally in any environment As He is equally in all His creatures, none should be despised, injured or unkindly treated—for such contumely is against the Lord and falls back on the head of the offender, throwing him once more on the tortuous paths of reincarnation in our dark physical world

To protect the young Community of disciples (*Sikhs*) already subject to persecution, the sixth Guru converted it into a semi-military brotherhood, arming it with outward insignia and sacraments, and thus subjecting it to the purifying fires of martyrdom,

which instilled the necessary courage and manly resolution in its heart The Sikhs should therefore have a great place in the future of their country, as so pure and spiritual a Religion as theirs has already a great place among the religions of the world [1]

[1] I am immensely indebted to the well-known Sikh scholar, Bhai Joh Singh, M A , Principal of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, for very kindly reading though the entire manuscript of this book, making frequent suggestions and several emendations He was good enough to write to me on it as follows

" I have read the manuscript sent by you and have gone through it very carefully I have noted certain historical inaccuracies that I have found and given the correct facts I have not made any suggestion where original text could bear your interpretation Yes! From the doctrinal point of view your account is accurate I congratulate you on the industry that you have put in this work " (7-12-1951)

I must thank also the friends of the Sikh Cultural Centre in Calcutta, who have very kindly pointed out several slight errors in transliteration and printing, and of far greater importance, have thrown light on the life of Guru Gobind Singh which was unknown to the authorities consulted by me earlier Changes made in the Second Edition were almost entirely due to their suggestion At the same time I must apologise for being unable to accept every suggestion they made, the volumes of this Series are for the general public, not for Sikhs alone, and excessive pedantry has been avoided in transliteration, certain letters of the type they use (e g a *d* with two dots under it) are not available in our Press, and save in the actual Gurmukhi passages it is better to use a system which will help ordinary readers to pronounce the words with reasonable accuracy The enclosing of certain final vowels in brackets would have made the page hideous and caused great confusion to the ordinary reader, and is not adopted here

This is also the time when I may thank good Sikh friends all over the world for their kind reception of this volume and for their eagerness to make it even more authentic as a statement of Sikh faith, practice and history by the careful reading they have given for this Second Edition

D G

PREFACE

IT was in early 1947 and I was in Adyar, a Sikh Theosophist who had served in the I N A heard of the *Gospel of Islam* in this series and that I was also writing other volumes, he asked me if I had ever read the *Guru-Granth Sahib* of their Guru Nanak I had heard of it, of course, but knew of no English translation and was ignorant of the dialect of medieval Punjabi in which it is mostly written But he assured me that I would find it easy, knowing Hindi, and would certainly love the book when I read it I then added the title to the projected Series [1]

Three years passed, and I had made the first selection of passages from Macauliffe's great work, Sikh friends from South Kanara, Bombay and Bangalore cooperated to send me a fine copy of the Holy Book, and a Sikh lady sent me her own portrait of Guru Nanak But until Volume 7 had gone to Press I found

[1] My grateful thanks are specially due to Principal N B Butani, to Sri K C Advani, Advocate, Bangalore, and to Sri Bhagwansingh B. Advani, President of a Gurdwāra in Bombay, for the gift of the Sri Guru-Granth Sahib, to Mrs Butani for the inspiring portrait which presided over my work and now appears as frontispiece to this Volume, to several Sikh friends for encouragement, to one for anonymous help from time to time—and to Dr Srinivasamurti, Hon Director Adyar Library, for thrice loaning Macauliffe's volumes and condoning long extensions of the time limits!

little time to work at all seriously on this volume When I did so, I was appalled at the difficulty in tracing the selected passages, Macauliffe, like almost all Sikh authors, satisfied himself with merely referring to the *rāg* and the *mahala* (author)—no chapter, no verse number! It took me more than a month to trace out all the passages, but this proved useful work, for it gave me a certain familiarity with the Book and a delight in its inspiring thoughts and most musical diction The more I dug into its pages, the more I fell in love with them—that Sikh friend was justified in his prophecy! Among the world's Scriptures few, if any, attain so high a literary level or so constant a height of inspiration

When it was time to select new passages to fill in logical gaps, to make certain rearrangements, to undertake a complete retranslation of the whole—the non-existence of a Gurmukhi-English dictionary naturally proved a serious handicap, though the Hindi of Tulasidas, Surdas and their contemporaries helped me out At times, though, I had to take my authorities on trust and merely shaped their English in harmony with that employed throughout Prin Teja Singh's English renderings of a few great sections of the *Guru-Granth Sahib* proved helpful in giving the spirit of some hard passages, while Prof Sahib Singh's excellent works gave me all confidence in their careful accuracy and scholarship, I soon had cause to give his versions preference over all others because of his deep knowledge of the grammar Here and there other renderings also threw light on dark places, but in a few I had no means

of going behind Macauliffe's version, as for instance in the narrative extracts used in §§ 2 and 53

In this volume, as in the case of Volume 5, the *Gospel of Zarathushtra*, I have felt it desirable to include a second part This is a direct and unbroken version of the *Japji*, Guru Nanak's great poem, which may well be classed with the Gītā, the Gāthās, and a few other spiritual masterpieces It is held to give an outline of all Sikh philosophy, it is the morning devotion on rising from bed, it is the most loved of all the Guru's hymns Hear what Puran Singh says of it "The hymn *Japji* is the burden of the whole 'Guru Grantha'. The day of the disciples begins with *Japji*. The melody breaks forth in our inner ears with the strain of the 'First dawn of Creation' Our eyes close, and as if in a dream, we stand listening to the music that rings through eternity. We are the children of *Japji* Its music is our motherland. It comes to us with an intimacy as close as if it were born of the hidden seat within our soul The maker of this hymn is so filled with its beauty, that he himself, the Master of its Music, is entranced with it Ever since its birth, every morning, in its chant we have the mingling of a myriad holy voices, the voices of the disciples I feel at times that with *Japji* I am as one transported to the Land of Immortals I am as one apart from the body, listening in wonder to a Voice reciting *Japji* In my reverie, I feel the singer has hands that touch my soul Then I realize that *Japji* is the Word With such visions I do not feel lonely . When the world beats us and

breaks us by the weight of its matter, we go to *Japji*. The sore melancholy of our heart and mind is made whole by *Japji* The soot on our faces burns up, and they begin to glow like the burning roses" (pp. 132-134). After this, I think I need offer no apologies for including my inadequate poor rendering in this volume complete

The Guru's hymns have been the life of the Sikhs. The Sikh Community is not among the largest of the world's religious groups, there may be about five million baptized Sikhs, and perhaps twice as many more who have preferred to hold their worship secret in their hearts But their importance in India's religious life is out of all proportion to their numbers; as a strongly martial people, stationed for the most part on the uneasy north-west frontier of the land, they are its guardians, and on their happiness and loyalty must depend largely the safety of the whole of India Such was their name in the past that Gen Sir John J H. Gordon wrote "None have fought more stoutly and stubbornly against us (British), none more loyally and gallantly for us, than the Sikhs" (*The Sikhs*, p. 3), while the British ruled India they indeed provided the "flower of the British Indian Army". Today also the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force are filled with these brave men, and they will give as good an account of themselves in the future as in the past, when they almost made a hobby of collecting Victoria Crosses. Even in the eighteenth century, when subjected to a most brutal persecution for many years, they stood firm;

they stood firm again during the tragic days in Panjab which followed the partition of 1947, they will stand as firm in any future dangers that may threaten India. The heroic spirit of the warrior saint and scholar, Guru Gobind Singh, is still alive among his "lion"-disciples And those who have tasted of the comradeship and kindliness of the Sikhs of today will not easily forget the pleasant experience

A religion which combines the most passionate mystic devotion and love of God with heroic conduct in daily life and social customs essentially just and reasonable—is certainly worthy of sympathetic study I trust and believe that a few of my readers at least may be urged to study the Holy Book itself, and then to share the fruits of their study with us by giving us a complete, accurate, sympathetic and literary translation of what is —apart from its great religious importance—certainly one of the world's masterpieces of poetry

Perhaps a word on why in this Volume the Introduction is largely devoted to biography and history may not be entirely out of place The Sikh Religion has never been a philosophy of books, of theorists, but as Mahtab Singh says it is a "discipline of life", an ideal of brotherhood inspired by passionate devotion to the Highest, guided by the example of the Guru's own life, and interpreted in the life-history of the Guru Khālsā-Panth Sikh history cannot be divorced from Sikh philosophy, it is its very life-blood Of course, none but a Sikh in union with the Khālsā can truly write that history, [illegible] a sort of presumption,

but I trust that my goodwill may compensate in some degree for my inadequacy and that Sikh friends will permit me to offer this fruit of happy labours at the holy feet of

GURU NANAK

INTRODUCTION

1. India before the Guru

1. The Hindus

DIVIDED over stupid petty dynastic and personal quarrels, the peoples of India, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain, put up a very poor defence against the ruthless, hardy and energetic invaders from the Muslimised Middle East In each province a few battles, a few secret betrayals were enough, indigenous rulers were replaced by Muslims, temples by mosques, the Purānas by the Quran This on the national scale, but of course countless millions of Hindus retained their own religion, at a price, and under the shadow of the conqueror lived lives which were little more than slavery

They practised their Hindu rites and social customs on sufferance and were liable at any moment to have them interrupted, forbidden on pain of death Many whose names history has not recorded died rather than turn false to the faith of their fathers, millions more found religion sit less heavy on their hearts, so that they embraced Islam, and in later years covered the name of that noble religion with shame for the atrocities they committed on their brothers who stood firm

Hinduism, as it was then understood, taught non-resistance, turned the eyes of its believers to a future betterment in Swarga, and so led them to indifference about the miseries of life on earth. Only the Brahmins were allowed to study Scriptures written in Sanskrit, and they neglected their duty to teach the spiritual realities to the masses, who sank into the most pitiable slough of superstition and materialism. Religion for them became a mere matter of special ways of eating, drinking, bathing, painting the forehead with caste-marks, marrying and disposing of the corpse. Where the local Muslim authorities were tolerant, or contemptuous enough, they were allowed to worship their idols and perform their pilgrimages—giving liberally to the ignorant and lazy Brahmins who presided at these functions; where they were permitted, they even rebuilt their temples or went in procession to the holy places like Kāśi or Pandharpur. The Brahmins themselves were satisfied with learning their mantras by heart so that they might earn a living by reciting them; they cared little or nothing for the meaning, nor did they attempt to live according to their precepts and ideals. Thus the people were ignorant and indifferent, their priests selfish and careless; both alike were sunk in meaningless rites and superstitions. Under the outer forms of various sects all spirituality was buried deep; many found it useful, while in their hearts keeping a certain sentimental attachment to their ancestral religion, to conform outwardly with that of the conqueror, adopting Muslim dress, even attending the

mosques and repeating the Muslim creed in public, so as to secure immunity from poll-tax and persecution alike, and open the door to their own social and financial advancement—for it was all but impossible for a loyal Hindu to gain worthy employment at that time or to hold offices about the court.

As the Muslims treated them, so the upper castes in turn treated the śūdras and untouchables, they had no swords or the right to slay at will, but they murdered them with hatred, contempt and social exclusion. Even a saint like Tulsīdās was not above referring to śūdras as men whom even the highest virtues could not raise, and other saints like Ravidās and Kabīr accepted their own upliftment in social life as exceptional, making little attempt to raise others of their own caste along with themselves. So utterly were the Hindus degraded that they were the prey to self-abasement and servility, had lost all self-respect and faith in their gods, and most of them being deprived by caste-rules of the right to bear arms they had all but lost that natural manliness which alone could promise a better future. One half even of the higher castes was also held down by contempt and dislike, women were held definitely inferior and could not attain to salvation or enter heaven till they had been reborn as men, they were considered to be sensual, natural tempters and spoilers of men's spiritual life—of which the first condition was their total renouncement. Thus the few who still looked for spirituality naturally turned away from society, and entered the forests or took to purposeless wandering,

a few may have 'meditated' during their travels, but most were idle tramps and fell into evil ways and many vices

Yes, it was an unhappy age for the heirs of the Buddha and Śankara, and the devotees of Vishnu Politically the state of the people was miserable almost beyond belief The Emperors at Delhi cared little or nothing for their welfare, most of them held that Hindus were created to be the slaves of Muslim believers and that their households might be freely broken up to satisfy the demands of lust. Nanak himself tells us that in his days "the kings had become butchers and cannibals, officials dogs that licked the blood and devoured the flesh of the people in their power, there was none to protect the honour of the weak or the women All was falsehood, and religion had flown away from such horrors as it beheld when Babar came to India" Most people sank under the burden of misery into a pessimistic resignation, but it stung Nanak into even challenging God for tolerating such brutalities (cf N *Asa* 39 1-2) Nor did things improve under the Moghul rule There may have been great splendours at court, lovely buildings like the Taj may have been built to delight the eyes of later tourists—but they were built with mortar moistened with the blood and tears of the people Ruthless taxation, the farming out of all lands to contractors who fleeced the people to the utmost so as to get enough for their own profits and for the heavy bribes which secured the privilege for the future, corruption and disorder

everywhere rampant, the country a prey to brutal murderers and dacoits, desolated by cruelty, wastefulness and vice, honours and places freely bought and sold, the rulers sunk in luxury and vicious debauchery. Terrible famines swept the land, like that of 1630 which destroyed Tukārām's family, irrigation was totally neglected, dynastic wars and rebellions were incessant, and travel was excessively unsafe and perilous Such is the picture of the life Hindus lived under the Afghan and Moghul tyrants

2. The Muslims

Nor were the Muslims themselves much happier. They were excessively intolerant and fanatical, to such an extent that Alauddin would allow Hindus to keep only enough corn and coarse cloth for six months, the common folk were totally ignorant of their own religion, their *mullās* being in no way more spiritual or religious than the Brahmins of their neighbours, and ignoring both the principles of the Qur'ān and all the humane laws of the Shari'at They throve on the self-assertion which their own brutality had made possible for them, regarded the non-Muslims as existing solely for their own pleasure as slaves, or worse, and so themselves degenerated swiftly Their few saints imitated the Hindus in withdrawing from society for the most part into the forests, where they could live in peace undisturbed by the cruelties which devastated the 'world' Muslims too looked upon women as playthings for their own lusts, as little better than toys or animals, intense

distrust of them made them imprison them in rooms away from sunlight and fresh air, letting them go out only under escort and disfigured with the hideous black veil (*burqā*) When a daughter was born to a family it was looked upon as a dreadful calamity, so infanticide, strictly forbidden by the Qur'ān, became quite common among them too, and it is even said that the practice of *satī* was not unknown among them in the days of Jahāngir

3. Religion in the Wilderness

When Elijah complained that he alone was faithful to God he was told that there were yet many, unknown to him, who had not bowed to evil So even in those dreadful days there were still men, a few, who came out of a society which they felt incurable in order to live lives of dedication and prayer to God Such a life was all but impossible in the towns, save for the very few who were strong enough and brave enough to fight at every stage But in the gloomy picture we have just seen we must not forget to add the sunlight which came from *Maharashtra* where the saints of Vitthal, followers of Jñānadeva, Nāmdev and Ekanāth, kept the saffron flag aloft, from *Gujerat*, where Narasingh Mehta was just finishing a glorious life of devotion to God in 1481; from *Bengal*, where Chaitanya was about to be born from a saintly family into a life which is still the inspiration of crores of Hindus everywhere (1485-1533); from the *Ganges plains*, where Kabir had begun to stir the masses with a new feeling of devotion, hope and

love; even from *Āndhra*, where Vallabhāchārya was awaiting the time to be born and to carry the fire through Western India (1479-1531)

So even before the Guru raised the standard of hope there were great tremblings of as it were aspiration and desire Advaitāchārya in far Navadwīp was praying daily for an *avatār* of God to save the people from the empty vanity of godless philosophers, the tyranny of their rulers, the slough of despond into which they had fallen Here and there in the forests and lonely places, in little-known valleys of the mountains, there were hermits and bands of seekers of God, who encouraged one another with hymns and strove by various yogic ways to realise the truth The Guru himself in his youth met many such and delighted in their company, which he could not have done had they all been hypocrites like the many God was, it seems, preparing the Revival, and because India was so vast no one man could do the whole work, so He was sending one to each part of India Men they were, not gods or *avatārs*, though their followers naturally called many of them such, men like us, but tempered of a finer steel, purified by the fires of steady devotion lit with the torch of faithfulness and effort To Punjab He sent Guru Nānak, when the hour was come and all was prepared

4. The Guru's Task

Out of this wretched, misery-trampled, hag-ridden peasantry the Guru had to build a nation of

self-respecting men, devoted to God and to their Leader, filled with a sense of equality and brotherhood for all, ready to die, nay, eager to die, as martyrs for their faith when opportunity allowed, and yet prepared to fight the tyrant with his own weapons in defence of the weak and to protect the righteous. The naturally law-abiding and peaceful Hindus had to be filled with courage, disciplined, and trained to use the sword and musket, where these were really required—yet the Gurus never fought save in self-defence, never raised the sword in anger, never forgot the noblest chivalry while fighting—and looking to the future with hope and faith instead of the blind despair of accepting meekly the effects of their *karmas* of earlier lives We are told that Nanak himself smelted the Hindu ore into steel by burning out the dross of hypocrisy and superstition, then Gobind Singh forged the sword of that steel

Nanak began the work by ridiculing superstition and outer show, by tearing caste-prejudices to pieces, by teaching and living a life of absolute brotherhood with his Sikhs and so leading them to extend that relationship in a wider field, he set out, in short, to awaken the demoralised people from their superstitious dreams and to give them new hope, bringing religion into daily life, filling the home itself with the constant thought and service of God as a personal Friend—and thus giving them a motive for clinging to their own faith instead of falling into Islam out of sheer cowardice and worldly ambition By persuasion and personal attractiveness

he also did all that he could to win the fanatical Muslims into a more human, a more Muslim, way of life. Like Kabir he was dead against idolatry and formalism in religion, and he was even more uncompromising in his total rejection of caste and all its implications, of all feeling that woman is inferior to man, and of all timid retreat from the world to the easy "security" of *sannyāsa*, fleeing from the dangers of society to the quiet forest.

Other reformers, other prophets and saints, strove elsewhere, each in his own way as taught by his Master, but in the Punjab Guru Nānak through the ten lives he devoted to his labours built a nation, brave and proud and strong, and taught men and women how to love God as a Friend, as a most beloved Intimate, upright and self-respecting instead of prostrate on the ground. That was the spirit he infused into the Sikhs, and it transformed the whole picture of society in the North of India.

2. The Vaishnava Devotees

When Guru Arjan compiled the Holy Book for all Sikhs, he included in it certain of the hymns and poems of God's lovers who had preceded Guru Nanak or were even then singing to God in India. Muslims and Hindus alike were thus honoured, provided their songs did not offend against the fundamentals of the Guru's doctrine, and the hymns of Kabīr, Farīd and Nāmdev were especially drawn upon to enrich the Guru-Granth

Sāhib As in our own "Gospel" we have included passages from nearly all the *bhagats* who were thus represented in the Guru Granth, it will be of interest to see a little who each of these was and something of what he did

1 *Kabir*, (1440-1518, though Sher Singh almost alone holds the earlier date 1398-1443), was born near Banaras of uncertain parentage and brought up by a Muslim weaver, whose craft he practised throughout life His life is full of miraculous stories, but what is known to be historical is a miracle enough for us He, a weaver, a Muslim, lived at Banaras, became the personal disciple of the Brahmin saint Rāmānanda preached to Muslims and Brahmins alike, was uncompromising in his teachings, became the Guru of many distinguished disciples, and left behind him a sect now numbering more than a million adherents This, in such an age, was indeed a wonderful thing.

While he worked at the loom, Kabir sang his songs, which friends must have written down for us They are homely, simple, direct and penetrating in their style, in easy Hindi of the age but inspired with the deepest vision of spiritual truth He never retired from the world, but lived a normal married life and is said to have had a son and a daughter, he too made fun of formalism in religion and the absurdities of the yogis of his day He taught God as the Lover, the Player, the Musician, impersonal and yet truly personal, "ever distinct and yet ever united" with the soul.

It is natural that at last in 1495 complaints against him as a heretic led to the Emperor Sikander Lodī banishing him from Banaras, he took to wandering here and there among the cities of the Gangetic plain until he died at Maghar near Gorakhpur The same story is told of him as of the Guru how after his death Muslims and Hindus both claimed him as their own and nothing was found of his body save a heap of flowers, of which each took a share and burned or buried it His songs still inspire devotees of God today wherever the Hindi language can be understood.

2 *Sheikh Farīd* Farīduddīn Mas'ūd, son of Jamāluddīn Sulaimān (eldest son of Sheikh Shu'ib) and Bibi Marīam, was born in 1173 near Dipalpur and by the age of five knew the whole Qur'ān by heart At 16 he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and had a vision of the Prophet, who promised to spend at his tomb nine hours every 5th day of Muharram. He then studied Theology at Kabul under the saint Khwājā Qutubuddīn Bakhtiār, after which he went with friends as far as Bukhara to meet saints and so came in touch with Shahabuddīn Suhrawādi He returned to his Guru, where he was a co-disciple of the Sultan Shamsuddīn Altamish, himself a former disciple of the famous Sufi saint Hasan Chishti When his Guru died, Farīd himself became a famous saint, his great disciple being Nizāmuddīn Auliya He married the daughter of Emperor Nāsiruddīn, and after him Faridkot is named; he had six sons and two daughters, and the eldest son Sheikh Badruddīn Sulaimān succeeded him when he

died of pneumonia in 1266 at the great age of 93. His tomb at Pākapattan, where he lived after his Guru died in 1235, is a great place of Muslim pilgrimage.

A later 'Sheikh Farīd' reigned as Pīr in the eleventh generation after the founder from 1510 to 1552 He was a scholar of Persian and Arabic, and a saintly man of true realisation, in his company the Guru spent delightful hours. He was a remote descendant of the Khālif 'Umar and of Farrukh Shah, the King of Kabul He had a collection of the hymns by the original Sheikh Farīd His burial-place was at Sarhind, his personal name was Ibrahim

3. *Nāmdev* (1269-1295), one of the greatest of Maharashtra saints and the personal friend and companion of Jnāneśwara, being about five years his senior He was born at Pandharpur and as a tiny child spent his time in the temple of Vitthal there, from 7 he delighted in singing to God to the music of his cymbals, dancing, and treating God as his playmate and friend He neglected his studies, food, sleep, for this blessed occupation, and had many wonderful adventures showing him God's loving care of him at all times, even when his neglect of business must have led him into great trouble with his father He met Jnānadev when about twenty, and was persuaded by him to go on pilgrimage round India for about five years, this helped to widen his view of God beyond the limits of Vitthal's form and shrine at Pandharpur. The story is told how he was driven to find a Guru and was taught by Viśoba Khechar that God is everywhere It is he who,

seeing God in that form, once ran after a dog that had stolen his *chapatti* to give it some butter also. He was present when Jnānadev took *samādhi* at Ālandi We have still about 4000 poems believed to be from his pen. His servant maid, Janābai, was almost as famous a saint as himself Nāmdev too was a householder, his wife was Rajabai, and he had four sons and a daughter There is a tale that as a youth he once joined a party of dacoits, but this does not cohere with the rest. Macauliffe says he was born in 1270 to Damasheti and Gona Bai at Narsibamani near Satara, he also gives the date of his death as 1350, being buried at the door of Vitthal's temple opposite the Harijan saint Chokamela

4. *Ravidās*, or *Raidās* (15th century), another of Rāmānanda's disciples, was a tanner-cobbler who used to give away shoes to all God's lovers and once made an image of God out of hide One saint gave him the "philosopher's stone", which he carelessly left in the thatch of his hut for over a year, explaining that he wanted only God's Name and not such useless wealth One day he found five gold pieces and spent away the whole in building a temple and hostel for the poor. He used to cure lepers, and even Brahmins came to him Others harassed him when a Queen of Chitor became his disciple, God showed a cobbler sitting next to each caste-proud Brahmin at their feast It is said he lived to 120, he left many poems of devotion and there is a sect of Vaishnavas called by his name the *Raidāsis* even today

5 *Jayadeva* (12th century) was a poet at the court of Lakshman Sen. He tells us his father was Bhojdeva, his mother Bāmadevi, he was born at Kenduli near Birbhum For a long time he would not even write the lovely songs in Sanskrit which flowed from his mouth with music Nor would he at first agree to marry Padmāvati when his God bade him do so and he persisted in his life as an ascetic He put up a hut with a shrine in it, here he wrote his second great book, the immortal "Gita Govindam", his two other great books were "Rasana Rāghava" and "Chandraloka" on the graces of literary style. But neither of these came up to the "Gita Govindam", which in lovely words tells of the divine love of Rādhā and Krishna, the soul and God, and is, as Macauliffe says, the world's one great popular poem in what was already a dead language It won immediate fame, and Muslims too delighted in it Javadeva went to Brindāvan, at Jaipur he was attacked by thugs and mutilated Karaunch, King of Utkala, saved him and when the thugs came disguised as *sannyāsis* Jayadeva called them his brothers and defended them from all suspicion When Padmāvati was falsely told of Jayadeva's death, she herself died at once—illustrating what the Guru was to tell us later is the only real *satī*, the story goes that Jayadeva raised her to life and they both returned to Kenduli, where they served saints and adored the One God

6 *Rāmānanda* (c 1360-1450), a follower of the sect of Rāmānujāchārya (1017-1137), was born at Mailkot, son of Punyasadan and Suśila Sent to Banaras for

education, he there met Swami Rāghavānanda who initiated him and, at the destined hour of death, saved his life by putting him in a trance He went on a long pilgrimage and on his return defended himself by showing the impossibility of keeping all the customary rules of Vaishnavas for taking food, etc This led to a breach, Rāmānanda broke away and formed his own sect, abandoning caste-exclusiveness and recognising human equality, his verse shows his teaching *Jāti panthi pūcchai nāhi koi| Hari ko bhaje, so Hari kā hoi||* (Let no one ask of caste or sect, if he worships God, then is he God's) He had twelve disciples two were women, one a barber, one a cobbler, one a weaver, one a soldier and Muslim, one a peasant He became famous for his love for God and kindness to man, opening the way to God for all through the use of the Name He died in Banaras, and his disciples transformed the face of Hindu religion

7 *Dhannā* (early 16th century), a Jāt farmer's son born at Dhuān in the State of Tonk near Deoli He was illiterate and could not read the scriptures but was full of love for God even from childhood, thanks to the *sādhus* who used to visit his father At five he saw one Brahmin *sādhu* worshipping a *sālagrām* stone and persuaded him to let him copy this act even with a common black stone, in which the child saw God's image He now gave all his time to the worship of God through this, offering all his food to it first and quickly thus increasing in devotion and intimacy with the Lord He would not eat for many days until the

Lord first ate a little of his *chapattis* before his eyes, nor did he dream this was no usual experience Krishna used to go with him to the fields, milk the cows at his side, play with him When that Brahmin came again he was amazed at the simple love of the little boy. It is said that when he grew older he once gave away all the seed-grain as alms to some *sadhus*, and then ploughed the field, God, even without his planting any seed, made that field give a heavier crop than any other in the village While Guru Nanak was on his long journeys he once visited this saint, who must by that time have grown very old if, as Macauliffe says, he was born in 1415

8 *Pipa*, born in 1425, was the 'king' of Gagar-aungarh and was always kind to saintly men, so that they prayed for him He was sent by Durga in a vision to Rāmānanda, who at first would not see a king, he went home, sold all and gave to the poor, returned as a *fāqir*, and was even ready to drown himself to obey the Guru He was accepted and sent home to serve saints for one year, after which the Guru took Kabir and Ravidas to visit him He left his throne and went with his wife to Dwārka, they fled from growing fame as saints there, and his wife was with difficulty rescued from some Afghan soldiers Then they went to the N-W Frontier region, and whatever they received they at once spent on the poor He converted King Sursen and turned him into a hermit When some thieves stole his buffalo, he gave them the calf also, so they restored the animal, when others stole his wheat he

gave them money to buy cooking vessels, so they gave it back also

9 *Sadhna* (late 13th century) was a butcher at Sehwan in Sind, he used to sell meat killed by others, weighing it with his *sālagrām*-stone A Brahmin rescued the holy stone from such a mean work, but it refused his worship and demanded to be taken back to the poor butcher, who then became a great devotee of God He suffered much from the false accusation of a woman and his hands were cut off, he was finally walled up alive His tomb is at Sarhind in East Punjab.

10 *Beni*, of whom nothing is known save that he may have lived about the twelfth century His writing is archaic in language and very hard to understand

Other Vaishnava saints whose writings were included by Guru Arjan in the Granth Sahib but are not included in our own "Gospel" are *Saín* (1390-1440 about), a barber in Rewa who acted as a surgeon, a matchmaker and a storyteller Because he devoted himself to serve *sadhus* rather than care for his own interests, God once took his place at his master Rājarām's court and saved him from great trouble. *Bhikkan* (died 1573) was perhaps a disciple of Kabir; he lived at Kakori, and Teja Singh tells us he was a learned Muslim, *Sūrdas* (born 1528) was a Brahmin named Madanmohan, whom Akbar made Governor of Sandila, near Hardoi in Awadh, he spent away all the revenue on *sadhus* and fled before inspection of the accounts When he refused to appear before the

Emperor he was jailed for a time, and on release devoted himself to serve *sadhus* in all humility and then retired to the forest, *Parmānanda*, a Brahmin disciple of Rāmānanda, lived at Barsi near Sholāpur, and had incessant vision of Krishna within and without, he used to prostrate 700 times daily and was always in tears of love and ecstasy, *Trilochana* (born 1267) went to Pandharpur and always served *sadhus*, when too many came for him he sought a helper, Krishna Himself came in the name of Antarjāmi and served them for thirteen months, till Trilochana's wife grumbled at having Him also to look after and then He vanished

These saints, and many many more like them, enriched the soil of India's spiritual life during those dark days of foreign rule and interior decay of spirituality and faith among the masses

3. One in Ten—Guru Nanak

1. Guru Nanak I—Humility

1 *Early Life* (*1469-1507*)

In the simple village of Talwandi, about forty miles from Lahore, were living a Kshattriya farmer and village official named Mehta Kalu and his wife Tripta Kalu was the son of one Sivarām and Banārasi, and the family had come to that village from the Amritsar district some years before They were worthy people, honest and hard-working, with the normal share of religious piety Early on the morning of Saturday

15th April 1469, their hearts were gladdened by the birth of a son, whose glory was destined to shine out through the centuries. They called him NĀNAK, and the astrologer who attended his birth foretold he would rule both Muslims and Hindus and would worship one only God.

At the age of five little Nanak began to talk of God, and his prattling words were admired by all. At seven he was sent to the village primary school under one Pāndhā[1] and learned what his teacher knew, but he is said to have often embarrassed the poor man by penetrating questions into the reality behind all things.[2] When he was just eight his elder sister, Nānakī, was married to Bhai Jairām, revenue collector for the Nawāb Daulat Khān of Sultanpur, and left him alone with his parents. Next year, 1478, they insisted on investing him with the sacred thread to which his caste in Hindu society entitled him, though for a long time he rejected it and asked for a real thread, spun from mercy and contentment, which the pundit could not promise him. At school he learned to read and write, and acquired some sound knowledge of the current Hindi dialect, in order to succeed his father some day as village accountant he learned Persian also, and we have an acrostic in Persian said to have been written in his childhood.

[1] Gopal Pandha is said to have taught him Hindi, Pandit Brijnath to have taught him Sanskrit, and Sayyid Hasan other things.

[2] He is said to have demanded the esoteric meaning of the first letter of the alphabet, just as Jesus did in GMC 15 3. Such children are very difficult pupils!

In those days he spent much time in the fields grazing buffaloes, and we are told the shade of a tree under which he rested used to move round against the sun so as to give him always of its coolness [1] His heart was already seeking God He found no interest in the secular works his father put him to—digging in the fields, working in a little shop, and the like He sought every chance of slipping away into lonely places where he could feel the unity and beauty of nature and reach out towards that great God, who of His own Love has woven this infinite pattern of loveliness At times he gathered together a few friends round him, and they sang hymns to the glory of that Creator whom he had begun to love with fiery yearning.

All this piety in their son did not please his parents, for he was their only son and they looked for one to carry on their worldly avocations and to support them when old age drew near. They thought him ill, they sent for the village doctor, he in vain prescribed his remedies, for none could cure the boy's feverish thirst for God [2] Then they got him married, on 1st April 1485, to divert his mind from such unworldly thoughts: the girl chosen was Sulakhni or Kūlamāī, the daughter of Bābā Mūlaji of Batala, near Gurdaspur of today. But this ruse too was unsuccessful, when his mother, in understandable exasperation, bade him leave his

[1] There is no need for the usual crass incredulity of today in the matter of such incidents narrated in the lives of God's chosen ones They are one with Nature, and she exists to serve the devotees of her Lord

[2] *cf* GGS 6 2-3.

endless meditations, he lay down for four days unmoving, and said he would die if the Name were taken from him [1] His poor little wife could do nothing to turn his mind He now took to meeting sadhus and yogis in the dense forests, giving them food from his father's fields, and talking with them of everything they knew about God and the spiritual path Seeking their company more and more, he must have gained from them much encouragement in his own search for the one Truth, and it is probable that in this way he confirmed those ideas he shared with Kabir and the great Vaishnava devotees of his age

In 1497 was born his elder son, Srichand,[2] and three years later came Lakshmidas, but Nanak paid little heed to his family, meditated much, became more withdrawn from the world, and found his greatest creative joy in singing hymns he had composed to God In contact with the sadhus he also learned how to speak so as to convince others, expressing his views persuasively, though it seems certain that those views welled up from the deeps of inspiration in his own heart and owed little or nothing to what he received from others, either through books or through their words The family had enough land to support them, so they were never in want, but Kalu again and again tried to induce his son to till the fields steadily and give up his useless dreaming and poetry He even tried, in vain, to send him for business at Saiyidpur and Lahore,

[1] *cf.* GGS 32 5

[2] Afterwards fonder of the "sect" of Udāsīs or mendicant Sikhs

while he was working at Chūhalkāna, his father sent the lad twenty rupees to buy goods for trading, but he gave it all away to some wandering ascetics

Next year, it was in 1504, Bhai Jairam visited his relatives at Talwandi and agreed with Rai Bular, the village Zamindar, that Nanak could well be employed at Sultanpur with him The idea of his son getting Government employ delighted Kalu, and he sent him off gladly with his brother-in-law Jairam introduced Nanak to Daulat Khan, who appointed him a store-keeper, at last the young man devoted himself to his duties with honesty, zeal and efficiency, delighting everyone Unlike most petty officials of the time, he was totally free from corruption and would not even improperly hold a pie of another's money for a day. He also gave away most of his own salary to the poor

At this time Mardana, a minstrel, came from Talwandi and joined Nanak as personal attendant They loved each other from the start, and used to delight each other at night singing sweet hymns to God. Mardana playing the *rebeq* to accompany his friend. One Bhai Bhagirathi also came from Mailasi, near Multān, and stayed for a while with Nanak as a sort of disciple, his teaching life was beginning

2 *The Call of Nanak* (*1507*)

On 20th August 1507 came the day of destiny. After his morning bath in the river, Nanak sat for

meditation and heard God's call to give his life for world-uplift, guiding men on the right path to Him[1] He at once resolved to obey the call, after three days he returned to the office, resigned his post, gave away all he had to the poor, and prepared to set out on foot The Nawab did all he could to persuade him to stay, being deeply distressed to lose so good and so winning an employee, but others thought he had gone mad. One day, towards the beginning of September, he spoke to the local Muslims, beginning, "There is no Hindu, no Mussalman!" This was after he first put on Hindu *kashāya* robes as a sannyasi[2] Then he attended the mosque prayers with the Nawab and the local Qāzī, when all prostrated at the call, he remained standing on his feet This gave some offence and he had to explain to the Qāzī, in whose face he had laughed direct, that there was no prayer as yet, for the Qāzī's mind had gone off to a baby filly of his, while the Nawab was thinking of buying horses in Kabul. They had both humbly to confess the fact! When Nanak again spoke in public to the Muslims, he taught them what is a true Muslim[3], and they declared that he spoke as a real Prophet The Nawab's storehouses were found to be full, so Nanak got the good man to give away everything in them freely to the poor

[1] *cf* GGS 2

[2] From the start his dress was peculiar and did not conform to that of any sect then existing

[3] *cf* GGS 28 1-2

3 *The First Missionary Journey*[1] (*1507-1515*)

After a brief and apparently uneventful visit to his parents at *Talwandi,* Guru Nanak went with his companion Mardana, dressed as faqirs or sannyasis, to *Aimanabad* Here he was welcomed by a rich fellow-caste man, Malak Bhāgo, and invited to a feast, but he began his public ministry by deliberately breaking caste, going to the house of Lālo, a poor carpenter and a Sūdra, and spending the night with him in bhajana When Bhāgo next morning protested at this, the Guru told him the bread of the rich was full of the blood of the exploited poor He then took a loaf from Bhago's house and one from Lalo's, when he squeezed both from the one came blood, from the other the milk of human kindness Thus he showed how the coarse food of the poor offered with love is purer than the finest the rich can give in their pride Bhai Lalo later became a distinguished Sikh

They went together on their way to *Hardwar* for the Vaiśākh full moon Seeing the Hindus there throwing water to the east "for their ancestors", he turned round and began to throw water in handfuls to the west When asked what he was doing, he replied,

[1] I have used these words to translate the Punjabi *udāsī,* in order to stress the fact that the Guru's journeys were not in search of truth but to propagate the truth he already knew Macauliffe has entirely altered the life of Guru Nanak, I think without justification, in pursuit of an idea that the recorded itineraries are at least unlikely In my own reconstruction I have used the outline given by Sahib Singh, filling in details from Macauliffe and other writers as seemed most probable I see no reason to reject the early evidence on the Guru's three great journeys

"I am watering my dry fields at Talwandi". They mocked at him as a fool, till he pointed out that if their water could reach their ancestors, his could certainly reach his fields, which were much nearer Thus he made fun of certain superstitious rites, but he told others who were chanting God's Name together, "It is true that if you take the Name with love you will not be damned" He took fire from where a Brahmin was cooking food, and when they protested this had defiled the meal he replied, "It is already defiled by the evil thoughts in the Brahmin's heart". Some of the Brahmins there tried in vain to win him back to the Hindu fold

On the road to the south-east the two travellers met a party of yogis, whom Nanak taught what is true religion,[1] and they acclaimed him as a knower of the Real Near *Pilibhit* he sat under a withered pipul tree, and it was restored to greenness They visited *Ayodhya* and *Prayāg*, and so came to *Kāśi* (Banaras), where the Guru argued with various sectaries against idolatry and induced Pandit Chaturdas to give up worshipping the *sālagrām*, making him too a Sikh At *Gaya* he showed the foolishness of rejoicing at the birth of a child when in a few days the laughter turned to tears at the infant's death The Brahmins asked him to offer the usual *pinda* to his ancestors, but he refused to do any such thing, telling them what the real *Pinda* ought to be He stayed for four months at *Patna* with Salas Rai Jauhari, and then visited *Gorakhpur*, where Kabir was

[1] *cf* GGS 30

perhaps at the time—he died at Maghar very near by. After this they moved off into Assam, the far north-eastern corner of India

Somewhere in this region, at *Kāmarūp*, Queen Nurshāh made several attempts to entice him into worldliness by her wiles, but was herself converted for her pains We are told that in a lonely spot "Kaljug", *i e*, the evil spirit of worldly desire, tempted him to give up his mission "I possess everything," said he, "say but the word and I will build you a palace of pearls, inlay it with gems, and confer upon you the sovereignty of the East and West Take whatever pleases you!" (M I 79) But what could the Guru do with wealth but give it away? It might only lead him to forget God's Name and that would be death for him! These two incidents seem to be connected, and both may well be allegorised versions of some temptation of the heart, like those which came to Jesus and Zarathushtra.[1]

At one village in Bengal the wanderers were welcomed with insults and driven away, on departure. Guru Nanak blessed that village with all prosperity. Another village welcomed them with loving hospitality, and Mardana was amazed when his Master said the village would be broken up When asked to explain, Nanak said, "When these people are scattered abroad they will save hundreds besides themselves by their piety"

They travelled down the Brahmaputra, and then took ship for *Puri*, whither Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had not

[1] *cf* GMC 22 and GZ 29

yet come When all stood for the evening *ārati* in the great temple, Nanak remained seated and sang his own hymn telling how God is fitly adored by the whole of Nature (GGS 18) A certain Brahmin was boasting of his clairvoyant powers, so Nanak playfully hid the man's waterpot, and all laughed while he vainly sought it everywhere

They went on by sea or land to *Rāmeśwaram*, he was wearing wooden sandals and a rope twisted on his head for a turban, a patch and streak as castemark, and carrying a staff in hand He defended himself from the criticisms of the Jains of the South and then satirised them mercilessly, and by a short poem now in the *Āsa di Vār* converted the brutal ruler of some island on the way From Rameswaram he crossed the sea to *Ceylon*. he made the garden of Rājā Śivanabha here blossom miraculously[1] and wrote his mystical treatise *Prānsangali*, leaving it with the Raja, who vainly tried to detain this mysterious yogi at his court Returning to India, the two wended their way along the west coast to the banks of the Narbada, where the Guru composed the *Dakhani Oamkar* at Śiva's temple and converted a party of thugs They moved further west,

[1] The miracles ascribed to the Guru form a difficult problem, for it is not the claim of Sikhs that he based his teaching on such childish things Indeed many say with Kamla Akali "Guru Nanak has no miracles If he has, it is not his own, it is that of the True Name" Guru Har Gobind was sternly opposed to such acts as appear to transgress the laws of ordinary nature, and Guru Gobind Singh definitely denies that his father ever stooped to such Yet the lives all include stories like this, so we are free to give them some metaphorical sense if we prefer, even those of the raising of the dead by several Guru-forms

visited *Somnath* and *Dwaraka*, where Krishna once reigned as King, and returned homewards through *Bikaner* Probably it was on this desert journey that Mardana was distressed by thirst The Guru said, "We must refresh ourselves with God's Name Take your *rebeq* and let us sing some hymns" But Bhai Mardana protested he was far too thirsty to sing or play Nanak produced some fruits for him, but told him not to eat them yet, he disobeyed, eating some while on the way behind his Master, and at once fell down unconscious, so that Gurudev had to cure him by a miracle Then Mardana made two conditions for travel with his Master thereafter he should feed him as he fed himself, and he should never notice what he was doing Nanak agreed!

They came to *Ajmer*, and then visited the great Vaishnava devotee Bhakta Dhannāji at *Pushkara*, after this they came to *Mathura*, and so to *Brindavan* Here they watched the "Krishna-lila", with its actors dancing wildly with simulated emotion, and the Guru satirised the hypocrisy of such a show got up as a means of collecting money from the devout [1]

At *Delhi* he raised a dead elephant to life, but when Emperor Sikandar Lodi bade him repeat the miracle for his amusement he let it die again, saying, "It is God alone who destroys and brings to life". At the tomb of a Muslim saint in *Panipat* he was greeted with the usual "*Assalām 'aleikum*!" (The peace upon you!) but at once replied "*Salām Alekh*!" (Homage to the

[1] *cf* 'Asa di Var', pauri 5, sloka 2.

Unseen!), the Sheikh there at the tomb at once went to meet this unusual kind of visitor and heard with great respect all he had to say.

He came to *Kuruksheira* in time for a great fair, where he shocked the orthodox pilgrims by solemnly cooking venison in their very midst When they expostulated, he pointed out the absurdity of such superstitious regard for the food of the belly [1] and added that those who preached *ahimsā* often drank human blood in their rapacious greed. He taught them that hermit or householder would reach God through the Name if he followed one of the four paths, company of a saint, honesty and truth, humility and contentment, or self-control.

On the homeward way he just visited his sister and her husband at *Sultanpur*, and then drew near his native village of *Talwandi* First he sent Bhai Mardana to ask if his father were still alive, telling him not to speak of his own return But Tripta at once guessed the truth and asked Mardana for her son, weeping; she followed him back to where the Guru was waiting. Once more she begged him to please her old age by living at home with her and taking to some trade, but he even refused the food and clothes she brought him in her motherliness, saying, "God's word is food, and brooding on Him is raiment!" Then Kalu arrived with a horse to take the wanderer home in order to show him the new house, but Nanak would not do this, for it is not right for a sannyasi to re-enter his

[1] *cf.* GGS 37 4

family house having once gone out His father tried even to tempt him with a new wife, but he replied that God's choice of Sulakhni was best and that he would endure till death Then Tripta tried to order him to come home and earn a respectable living, while Kalu reproached him for neglecting them for twelve years past, he sent his parents home alone, telling them they would soon be consoled [1] And so they were, when they saw what their son had become, the Guru of thousands of men and women of every class

Nanak then went to *Lahore* as the guest of the rich Dunichand for his father's *śrāddha* ceremony, and took the occasion to discourage all such rites and to convert the ruler to Sikh ways of life At *Pathāndi* he converted many Paṭhāns, and then he visited his wife and sons at *Batala* on the Beas River, to his uncle he foretold that Bābar would shortly conquer the Pathan kingdoms in India At last, after eight years constant wandering and at the age of 46, he settled on the site of *Kartarpur* in January 1516, and consoled his old parents by bringing them to live with him there quietly for nearly two years

4 *The Second Missionary Journey (1517-1518)*

The travellers resumed their wanderings late in 1517 by crossing over to *Uttarkhand*, where the Guru argued

[1] The Guru's mingled firmness and sweetness with his parents may be well compared with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's attitude to his mother and the Buddha's to his family after his Enlightenment

with a group of *siddhas* and yogis, again describing for these what true yoga means. Then they paid a short visit to *Kartarpur*, to console the Guru's parents, and after visits to *Pasrur* and *Emmābād* they went up to *Sialkot*.

Here one Pandit Brahmdās visited the Guru, with a pile of Sanskrit books in hand and an idol hanging on his breast, and twitted the Guru for wearing leather and a rope and for eating meat. Nanak made no direct reply, but burst into an ecstatic hymn on God and the Guru and the wonders of creation. The Pandit was pleased, but his pride kept him from surrendering so soon. The Guru sent him to four faqirs who would show him a guru to his taste; the faqirs sent Brahmdas to a temple, where a woman gave him a sound shoe-beating. This, the faqirs told him, was his real guru, and her name was Māyā, worldliness! Cured of his pride, the Pandit hastened back to Nanak and made a full surrender at his feet.

The Guru then visited *Śrīnagar* and crossed the mountains to *Mt. Sumeru*, where he had a certain mystical experience among the great siddhas of that remote Himalayan summit.[1] They welcomed him among them as one of their own. Returning to *Sialkot*, he sent Mardana to purchase a farthing of truth and a farthing of falsehood. He found there an old friend, Mūla Khatrī, who said, "Life is a lie and Death is the truth." When the Guru came to Mūla's house his wife

[1] This seems to have been something like the great Initiations which we are told take place beyond the Himalayas on inner planes from time to time—see C. W. L. "The Masters and the Path."

hid him away lest he be converted and join the pilgrims, lying that he was not at home. As he lay hidden there in the house, a snake bit him and he died. Death was indeed the truth for him!

At *Mīthānkot* they visited Sheikh Miān Mīthā, a noted Muslim saint, and the Guru had with him a verse contest convincing him that God alone is true and no prophet or saint can be named along with Him. As the Sheikh fell at his feet in reverent delight, Nanak fell into a trance of ecstatic love and uttered one of his divine hymns. From here they returned home to *Kartarpur*.

5. *The Third Missionary Journey* (*1518-1521*)

Wearing blue robes, the Guru set out for his last long journey with Mardana once again, and went straight to *Pākapattan*, the abode of Sheikh Ibrahīm, the heir to Sheikh Farid and himself also a great Sūfi saint. The Sheikh scolded Nanak for wearing secular clothes even while he lived as a faqir, to which he replied, "God is all I have, and He is everywhere, even in these clothes!" The two then competed in verse, gradually leading each other up to the sublimest heights of philosophic beauty, and so they passed the whole night in delightful spiritual companionship. In the morning a peasant brought them milk, and when he took away the bowl it had turned to gold and was full of golden coins. Nanak was pleased with this holy man, and as he went his way punned on his name, saying, "Sheikh Ibrahim, God (Brahm) is in you!"

Before he left Pākapattan, however, the Guru made a copy of Sheikh Farid's ślokas, many of which are now included in the Granth Sahib

By way of *Tulambha*, the pair moved on through South Punjab towards the *Bahawalpur* State Perhaps this was when the Guru visited a notorious robber who thought he would be an easy victim But by a few verses Nanak showed that he knew the murderous intention, and he begged for pardon The Guru replied, "Forgiveness in God's Court is gained only after an open confession and full amends done for the wrong" The robber at once confessed all his many murders and dacoities, gave away all his illegal gains to the poor, and under the name of Sajjan became a famous Sikh missionary in all those parts

They went to *Surat*, and from there took pilgrimship to *Jeddah*, and thence went up to *Mecca*, the holy city of all Muslims He was roughly awakened from sleep here with his feet pointing towards the holy Ka'ba and was well scolded, he apologised quietly and asked the man to turn his feet anywhere he could where God was not[1] He often gave the Call to Prayer here, and used to play with the children in the street, being followed about by them much as the Prophet Hazrat Muhammed was in his time People noticed that there was always a cloud shading his head during the heat of the day

From Mecca, the two went on to *Medina*, where the Guru vanquished the Qazis in argument, though we

[1] The same story is told of one of the Mahratta saints.

must remark that the Muslims of these parts seem to have been surprisingly tolerant to him, such a miracle could hardly occur in our own days, for travellers like these would barely escape with their lives They proceeded to *Bāghdād*, where Guru Nanak gave a new Call to Prayer, changing the words of the Creed while acting as *muezzin* The people asked him to what sect he belonged, his answer was· "I reject all sects and only know the One God, whom I recognise everywhere I have appeared in this age to show men the way to Him" Then he repeated the *Japji* to them, so we are told, and when the son of their "high priest" challenged the reference to "many heavens and under-worlds" he gave him a vision of some of these.

Crossing the Irān plateau, they next went to *Balkh*, for many years the home of the Prophet Zarathushtra, and then on to *Bukhāra* in Central Asia So they worked their way round by *Kābul* to *Peshāwar*, where the Guru argued with yogis at the temple of Gorakhnath. Descending to the plains at *Hassan Abdal*, a noted Muslim centre, he was forced to dig a small well for himself, and this drew away the water from a rather selfish "saint", one Bawa Wali living higher up Wali threw a hill at Nanak, who protected himself with his right arm and left the mark of his hand *Panja Sahib* on the hill [1]

[1] Here we surely have a piece of folk-lore, it reminds one of the legend of St Michael on the Tor at Glastonbury. The print of five fingers on the hill was long shown as a relic of Guru Nanak here

By way of *Bhera Shahu* and *Dinga*, he came to *Eminābād*,[1] immediately after Bābar's invasion of the Punjab. All was in confusion, Pathan and Hindu houses alike were robbed and burned to the ground, women were driven along shrieking and weeping. Nanak made a pathetic poem about their sufferings. The pair were imprisoned under Babar's officer, Mīr Khān, and made slaves. Nanak had to carry loads on his head, Mardana to sweep with a broom or lead a horse. The officer saw the load floating a cubit above the Guru's head, while Mardana played the *rebeq* and the horse meekly followed him. He reported the wonderful sight to Babar, who came to see it for himself. He found Nanak feeding corn to a handmill and singing some hymn while the mill turned itself. He prostrated before the Guru and offered him a boon, Nanak asked only for the release of all Saiyidpur captives, but these would not go free unless he too joined them. Then when they all got home they found everyone there had been massacred, Nanak sang a doleful lament in a trance, being deeply moved by the sufferings of the poor people. He went back boldly to Babar's camp and boldly sang to the prisoners held there, Babar offered him a drink of *bhang*, often used by "yogis", but he again fell into ecstasy and the whole body began to shine. On his request Babar set all his prisoners free and even clothed them in robes of honour, in return for which generous act the Guru promised, "Your empire shall remain for a long time". He

[1] Also known as Saiyidpur

stayed three days with the Emperor, but refused to accept anything for himself and firmly refused even to think of embracing Islam When Babar asked him for advice, Nanak told him to rule the people with justice and mercy, and this in fact during his short reign he did Thus Guru Nanak saved India at that time from much misery which the invasion must have otherwise caused to her

After this long journey in foreign lands and his useful contact with the Moghul conqueror, Guru Nanak settled down quietly to live in peace at *Kartarpur*, almost for the whole of the rest of his days

6 *Ashram Life at Kartarpur* (*1521-1539*)

He occupied himself largely with vigorous work in the fields, a rich convert having founded there a new village with a Sikh "temple", to which disciples gradually began to gravitate from wherever he had preached his message He also wrote down many of the hymns he had already sung elsewhere and which no doubt Mardana had committed to memory. Thus the *Mālār* and *Mājh Vārs* were written out while Mardana still lived, and the *Japji* and *Asa dī Vār* soon after them; when Mardana died, in 1522, he was succeeded as chief minstrel by his son Shāhzāda

The Guru now put off his weird costumes and dressed himself as an ordinary householder of the day. He regularly preached to the great crowd who came

out daily to see him, teaching all to live in the world and work, while at the same time thinking of God always and praying for nothing but His grace. His strong personal attractiveness, his lovable ways and playful sense of humour, his persuasive words and simplicity which came out of the heart of his own all-embracing love went straight to the heart of all his hearers, he seemed to draw the poor and sorrowing especially to his arms He taught all to drop meaningless outer forms and complications, to cling to the very simple essential Truth, to abandon caste and all other forms of egoistic pride, and to seek refuge only in the Name His great courage in so boldly speaking out open criticism of Islam and Hinduism wherever he went shows us that he was no milk-and-water moon-baby but a true predecessor of that great hero Guru Gobind Singh Yet his lively speech "radiated love and faith and attracted men as light gathers moths", says Puran Singh (p 131) "Wherever he went the hearts of the people were gladdened and they began singing his Song of Silence, which is not written on paper but on the hearts of his disciples, and there it still sings as of old "[1] Yet in his own person he was the very essence of humility, though always so quietly firm for the truth He never claimed any extraordinary greatness for himself in spite of his vast influence,

[1] Much of the spiritual strength of Sikhism comes from this certain conviction that Guru Nanak still lives in every true disciple, and the fragrance of his presence seems to flow round them when at prayer

deeming himself a mere man among men, mortal and sinful as they were, though conscious of his union with the almighty Lover of all souls Nor would he hold anything for himself even after settling down to "worldly life" again, whatever came to him he at once spent away on building almshouses or providing food for the poor.

A shopkeeper convert lived three years with him in those days, and then sold his goods away, took his Guru's blessing, and went to Ceylon, where he converted that same Raja Sivanabha who had been the Guru's host long before. To this man, as he left, Guru Nanak promised: "Whoever bathes in cold water and for three hours before dawn repeats God's Name with love and devotion shall receive nectar at God's door and be blended with Him who is unborn and self-existent" (M. 1 146)

One morning the Guru noticed a little boy of seven who came daily for the dawn prayers and quietly slipped away immediately afterwards Nanak asked the lad why he came and was delighted by his wise and pious answer This was Bhai Budha, who until his death installed the first five of the Guru's successors. In those days early each morning the Sikhs repeated the *Japji* and *Asa di Vār* in the Guru's presence, following these with more hymns, the Guru freely explaining and answering questions on points in them until about 9 30. Then followed the *ārati*-prayer taught at Puri, and after that came breakfast, all the Sikhs taking food together as one family More singing and preaching

followed, with manual labours, and after the *Rahiras* at sunset they had dinner together, followed by more songs; at about 10 they sang the *Sohila* and then all slept, though a few rose for prayer also in the night

Somewhere about the end of 1531 the Guru wrote his exquisite mystic poem on the Twelve Months, its theme being the loving union of the soul with God One day in 1532 Lehnā, the priest of Durga in Khadur, was led to the Guru, and he saw the goddess whom he worshipped adoring Nanak's feet He surrendered to Nanak at once and became his favourite and most faithful disciple Once when his friends congratulated the Guru on having so many converts he replied that he had in fact few real disciples, he then assumed a terrible form and many ran away from him at once, others only stopped to pick up some money and run; only one yogi, two other Sikhs and Lehna remained. The Guru asked these to eat of a stinking corpse, and only Lehna was ready for this, he found himself chosen as the Guru's eventual successor and the carrion turned to sweetest *prasād*, Nanak's own two sons had already proved themselves to be not perfectly obedient On Lehna's intercession all the deserters were forgiven and recalled to their Guru's side

Early in 1539 the Guru attended the Śivarātri festival at *Achal Batala*, where he wrote the *Sidha Goshti*, which is believed to be a report of a discussion held there with certain yogis who followed Gorakhnath, huge crowds saluted him with deep reverence He proceeded

further to *Pākapattan* and called again on Sheikh Ibrahim, the old man rose to receive his great visitor with deepest reverence, the two embraced, and spoke of God to each other in verse all that night, they were most loving to each other and each was thrilled by the sayings of the other He visited *Dipalpur* and went as far as *Multan* on this his last journey, and then returned home through *Lahore* He did not again leave his Ashram while in that body

On 2nd September he had Bhai Budha formally instal Lehna, later Guru Angad, as his successor, laying before him five pice and a coconut as offerings, the crowds there began to sing and for five days festival was maintained, a sweet feast of song Nanak fell into an ecstatic trance, his *gaddi* he had given to Lehna, the Name as heritage to his two sons They sang the *Sohila* and the last sloka of the *Japji*, the Guru covered himself with a sheet, uttered the Divine Name of Vāhigurū once, and passed into the Being of the Beloved Lord, his light being transferred to Guru Angad (Lehna) It was the 7th September 1539, and next day when the Hindus and Muslims disputed the right to dispose of the holy body they found only flowers beneath the sheet [1] The two *samādhis*, Hindu and Muslim, were later washed away by the River Ravi, so that men could not make them into idols and so betray the teacher they adored.

[1] The same story is told of Kabir, who died at Maghar near Gorakhpur, and of several other saints Sai Baba also united in his own person the two great Faiths

2. Guru Nanak II (Angad)—Obedience

1 *Early Life* (*1504-1539*)

Bhai Lehnā, whom Guru Nanak found worthy to carry on his work for men, was born four hours before day on 31st March 1504 at Matte di Sarān, near Muktsar in the district of Ferozpur His father, Bhai Feruji, was a trader and a village priest of the Goddess Durga, his mother was one Daya Kaur When the village was sacked during Babar's invasion the young man went with his father, his wife Khivi, two sons Dasu and Datu and a daughter Amro, to the town of Khadūr and there settled down, they used to go annually for the *darśan* of the Goddess, but after two years at Khadūr in 1526 Bhai Feruji died and Lehna became the head of the family

One early morning in 1532 he chanced to hear Bhai Jodhe chanting the hymns of Guru Nanak, and was so charmed by their beauty that he went at once to Kartarpur to see the renowned Saint He found Nanak hard at work in the fields, cutting grass with his own hands, and at once began to serve him as Guru, carrying bundles of the muddy grass on his own head That evening he saw his family Goddess doing *pādapūja* to the Guru, and his life was settled for him by destiny A short visit home was enough for him to wind up domestic affairs for good, and he settled at Kartarpur with the Guru to serve him and enjoy his sweet

company. Lehna's humility and voluntary poverty won the heart of Guru as he busied himself in sweeping the visitor's quarters, washing their clothes, and doing all kinds of other menial work Daily he used to bathe long before dawn and then sit before the Guru for three hours of rapt meditation Again and again was he tested for patience, endurance and obedience, always he came triumphantly through the tests After three years, in 1535 he was sent home to his village, where the Guru twice visited him On the second visit he changed the name of this faithful servant, embracing him he called him "*Angi-khud*" (*i e* , *Angad*, of my own limb) and added "Hereafter there is no more difference between you and me!" He then took him back to Kartarpur

On the 2nd September 1539 the Guru bade Bhai Budha put the *tilak*-mark on Angad's brow and proclaim him the future Guru by seating him on the royal *gaddī* But Guru Nanak's sons, Srichand and Lakhmidas, were vexed at this, so the Guru sent his beloved disciple home to Khadur, where for six months he lived in silent intense meditation, taking daily a small pot of milk and seeing no visitors The Sikhs were distressed at the absence of their chosen teacher, but for a long while no one could find out where he was till Bhai Budha used his clairvoyant powers With three companions he went to the place, and when he opened to them they saw his face shone like Guru Nanak's as he agreed to be their Guru in obedience to his own Guru's will

2 *Guru Angad (1539-1552)*

His was indeed a fine character, of sterling piety and unflinching devotion, so that he lived in an ecstasy of serving love He was fond of playing with children, took part in manly sports and enjoyed watching them also, and was always reverent to the common people All that came to his hands went at once for the poor, while he himself lived in extreme simplicity, earning his livelihood by twisting coarse yarn and string After his morning bath, singing of hymns and meditation, he used to heal many sick people, including even lepers; and then he preached to all who came to him, expounding the great hymns of Guru and often explaining them with couplets of his own After the common meal the children were called for their instruction, and then they watched wrestling matches, etc The Guru taught all who came to the Ashram, quite irrespective of their caste or apparent fitness for his teaching

Like his Guru, Angad too wanted to raise Hinduism from within, in order to expel superstition, he modified the script of the Punjabi language, that it might be more easily learned by illiterates and so the hymns be wider known This "Gurumukhi" script did much to break down the haughty exclusiveness of the Brahmins, who had enjoyed almost a monopoly of literacy and learning for so many years From his own memories and those of Bhai Bala and other disciples, Guru Angad wrote the first "Life" of Guru Nanak, and this was the first published work of Punjabi prose

He organized more fully the Guru's free kitchen, personally seeing to the needs of the poor who came there and with great kindness supervising their meals, which were taken along with devotees and other visitors, caste being thus freely broken by all in the Ashram This "*langar*" proved a powerful aid to publicity for Sikhism, besides being also a noble field of charity and a bond of union among the disciples, so that they were gradually welded into a distinct group. Though still holding many Hindu ideas and customs, the Sikhs shared a simple manly and zealous faith, purified from all gross superstition and lit by devotion to their common Guru

One day Emperor Humayun came there, he was told he must wait for an interview with the Guru who was then absorbed in deep ecstasy He was annoyed at this rebuff and angrily drew his sword, when the Guru received him he prophesied that Humayun must wander for some time in exile but would later regain his throne And that is what took place

The coming of Amar Dās to his Ashram brightened the Guru's last days in that body, though he was once driven away from Khadur by an ascetic because rain had failed, as the ascetic failed to make rain, the people drove him away and called Guru Angad back He passed with the name of Vāhigurū on his lips, on Tuesday, 29th March 1552, after very nearly completing 49 years of life and after installing Amar Dās as Guru in his place because he deemed his own sons to be unworthy The "light" of Guru

Nanak moved over into the already old body of Amar Dās

3. Guru Nanak III (Amar Das)—Equality

1 *Early Life* (*1479-1552*)

This Amar Dās, of such high destiny, was born on 5th May 1479 in Basarka, a village of Amritsar District, at a time when Guru Nanak was a little boy of ten He came of a good Kshattriya family staunch in Vaishnava principles and regarding with loathing the taking of meat, his parents were Tejbhān and Bakht Kaur Impelled by the traditions of his own faith to seek a Guru even in his old age, this kindly simple-hearted man one day heard Amro, his nephew's wife and daughter of Guru Angad, singing the Guru's hymns, and he was so charmed by the lovely melody and thrilling words that on learning these were the songs of the Guru of the singer's uncle he at once sought out the Ashram at Khadūr

Realising at once his visitor's Vaishnava preferences in food, the kindly Guru Angad offered him *dāl* with his bread, but he did not like to see himself treated differently from other devotees, so he made a complete break with his past and asked them to serve him meat along with the others This moral courage and readiness to "jump" delighted the Guru so much that Amar Dās became his favourite disciple And what can we say of the great heart of Amar Dās himself?

One glimpse of the Guru was enough, he knew at once that here was his soul's Divine Teacher, the "raft" whereon he could cross over the stormy world-sea to the haven of liberation! After that, he could hardly bear to look anywhere save on the Guru's face, so that once later on he walked backwards all the way from Khadur to Goindwāl in the dark, so that at least his eyes might be towards the beloved form. So wholly devoted was he from the first that he forgot himself altogether and people thought him crazy—but his Guru understood that madness, which is love divine, for he knew it too.

At that time a disciple, Govind, was building at Goindwāl a new city for the Sikhs to live in together, Guru Angad tested the obedience of Amar Dās by asking him to help in the work there and so leaving the precious visible presence of his adored Guru. At first he had to sleep there every night only, coming daily for his *darśan*, but later on the test became more severe, for his Guru bade him stay there altogether. Nor did he waver for a moment, his absolute humility and obedience were firm and won his Guru's hearty blessing. Soon afterwards he was afflicted with a sore foot, but that too did not shake him at all—he was glad of it because the pain kept him awake at night so that he could remember God all the time! And in the day his old body laboured constantly in the Guru's work, and nothing made him so happy as to undertake some new duty when already utterly worn out with work.

Such was Amar Dās His Guru saw so great a contrast between his own sons' indifference and this aged disciple's tireless zeal that he did not hesitate in choosing him for his successor, enthroning him with the usual gifts of a coconut, five pice, and the *tilak*-spot on his brow On 29th March 1552 the spirit of Guru Nanak passed over to the already aged body of Bhai Amar Dās, and he became Guru in his turn

2 *Guru Amar Dās (1552-1574)*

For a while the Guru observed a retreat in lonely and silent prayer, and then assumed the responsibility of his high place, he was at this time 73 years old He too insisted on the middle way, rejecting alike Baba Srichand's asceticism and the world's luxurious frivolities He made the Guru's Kitchen still more famous, in it serving all castes together and letting no one see him before taking food there and so breaking caste restrictions. Personally, he still lived in the greatest simplicity, save for one single suit of clothes he gave away all his other possessions

Once Guru Angad's unworthy son Datu drove the Guru from out of Goindwal, where he had established his Ashram, setting himself up at Khadur as Guru Amar Das quietly withdrew to his own village of Basarka, and there immured himself in one room of a peasant's house, he sought no power or prestige for himself, and like other saints gladly welcomed all that came to him as the will of his beloved God. But

others could not tolerate the usurper; none would have him as Guru, so after a while he took everything he found in the place and went off home again to Khadur, on the way there he was robbed and wounded also. Though saints do not defend themselves, those who injure God's chosen must expect to suffer No one knew where the real Guru had gone, so they asked Bhai Budha, and he followed his mare's leading and she took him to the village retreat They broke in the wall and persuaded Guru Amar Das to return with them He at once forgave Datu, as he forgave all other enemies and traducers, and himself lived out his own advice to others "If one ill-treat you, bear it three times, and God Himself will fight for you the fourth time"

Once he went to the forest for a brief period of peaceful solitude Being ill-received by the Governor of Kasur, he foretold that some day a Sikh State would arise there Another successful prophecy he made was when little Arjan, his grandson, stole some food from his plate he playfully said, "Come, heir to the plate, will you have it?" and people rightly took this as a sign Arjan would some day be the Guru

Twice he raised those who had died, with a little water, a touch from his foot and the holy words of *Japji*, he restored a dead boy, and again his own grandson was brought back to life by the Name of God and a touch from the Guru's foot Some of his bath-water cured the leper Prema, whom he made into a saint and renamed Murari, marrying him into a good

family With a mere look or a few kind words he turned Sikhs and Muslims into saints, one day he called his elder son Mohan "crazy" and this at once drove him mad with love for God

One day Māidās, a strict Vaishnava, came for *darśan* but could not bring himself to take food in the Guru's free Kitchen so went away disappointed to Dwaraka. There he met Sri Krishna in a forest, He fed him and told him to return for more of such divine food to the Guru at Goindwal He at once obeyed and was very lovingly welcomed by the Guru and given one of the bravest of the Sikhs as teacher Later Maidas left, a perfected saint And this was how the Guru made men.

Guru Amar Das divided the whole area whereto Sikhism had then spread into twenty-two dioceses (*manjā*), each under a pious Sikh who taught and organised the *sangats* (assemblies) where the Sikhs gathered to sing the Guru's hymns together and to enjoy each other's holy company He also trained and sent out 94 men and 52 women as itinerant preachers to various parts of India, two went to Delhi and founded the first Sikh temples there He chose three days for common Sikh assemblies every year Diwali, and the first days of Vaisakh and Magh Everywhere he taught gentleness, forgiveness and self-control, stressing a holy life and showing how futile is caste pride, his fame as a great saint spread in all directions

Once on his way to Lahore Emperor Akbar came to see him and treated the coarse rice of the Guru's

Kitchen as the holiest of nectar, behaving before him with the utmost reverence. But vain were his offers of villages as an endowment, the Guru would have none of them and gave them at once to his daughter Bibi Bhāni, with Bhai Budha to look after them, and their income went altogether to the poor in charities

Some orthodox Hindus complained to Akbar that the Guru was extorting funds from them to maintain his own "Court", but Akbar at once scouted the absurd tale Then they protested against the ruining of caste and defiling of religion by using the Panjabi vernacular instead of the holy Sanskrit for teaching about God. The broadminded Akbar, who wished to be fair even to his Hindu subjects, at once asked the Guru to explain his position and treated with all respect Bhai Jetha whom Amar Das sent to Delhi as his messenger Akbar was convinced that the Guru was justified. Having failed in these charges also, the accusers now hinted that the Guru was secretly plotting rebellion and collecting funds to that end, but Jetha was able to convince Akbar that herein also they lied. He even got permission from the Emperor that the Guru should take, free of all charges and dues, a large pilgrimage party to Hardwar and thus show he was not opposed to Hinduism as such Amar Das actually did this; a huge crowd availed themselves of the chance to travel free, all of them claiming to be Sikhs of the Guru's party! The Guru taught all who gathered there, boldly disapproving of *Sati* and advocating the remarriage of Hindu widows

Once in a vision he saw the first Guru Nanak and was bidden by him to dig a tank at Goindwal, to which Sikhs might go on pilgrimage instead of to the Hindu shrines It was then that the Guru dug the *bavali* at that city, a place which is even now one of the chief places of Sikh resort A perfected yogi once came to him imploring that he might be born in the Guru's family, Amar Das at once foretold that this soul would come as the son of Mohari, his own younger son, when the child was born he sang the lovely hymn *Anand*, which is even now used at all festive occasions Once when he watched his Sikhs feasting he remarked, "Whatever the Sikhs eat nourishes me too, for there is no difference at all between us"

As an example of this Guru's simplicity, let me add here that he once earned his living as a carrier of goods from village to village, his pony being then his only property, he would never eat food from the public funds devoted for the Guru's Kitchen, but used to carry fresh water from the river for the old Guru, Angad, to bathe in—a distance of four miles each way—and so felt he had earned his keep When other disciples twitted the old man as a homeless beggar, Guru Angad replied: "No, Amar is not homeless, but the home of homeless ones, and he who will follow him shall find his home with the Lord" It was this blessing which made his life so fruitful

In his turn, as Guru Angad had done with him, he severely tested his son-in-law Jetha to prove him worthy of Guruship, and, then installed him as Guru Nanak's

true successor At a great feast in Jetha's honour, Guru Amar Das announced his own immediate departure. Next day, when they had recited the *Japji*, amid joyous shouts of God's Name from the Sikhs, the old Guru covered himself with the sheet and passed, his light blending with God's; it was 10 a m. on the full moon day of Bhadron, 1st September 1574. The deserted body was cremated with royal state on the banks of the river Beas, and Guru Ram Das (Jetha) reigned as Guru Nanak.

4. Guru Nanak IV (Ram Das)—Service

1. *Early Life (1534-1574)*

At Lahore lived Haridās, the saintly son of one Thākurdās of the Sodhi sect; he and his wife Arūpdevī (Daya Kaur) worshipped only one God by repeating His Name and serving His devotees They prayed long for a pious son, and at last, on Thursday 24th September 1534, the son was born, saintly, kind and generous as themselves They called the little boy Jetha

When he was still but a young lad, Jetha one day met a party of Sikh pilgrims on the way to see their Guru, joining them he thus had his first *darśan* of Guru Amar Das, to whom he at once surrendered mind, heart and body—becoming a serving devotee at the Guru's Ashram After a while the Guru, who saw into the future, gave his own saintly daughter Bibi Bhāni or Mohani, as wife to the devoted young man, and then

sent him home for a short visit to his parents. On his return to the Guru, Jetha became a humble personal attendant on him, serving him day and night with tireless energy and devotion One day the Guru put on his neck a precious jewel, calling him "the Guru's own image, dearer to him than life", thus preferring him to his own sons Mohan and Mohari But when some filthy beggar asked Jetha for the jewel he gave it away to him without a moment's hesitation—so little could he cling to worldly things, even gifts from his beloved Guru

When Guru Amar Das sent him to persuade Akbar that he was innocent of oppression, anti-Hinduism and sedition, it was Jetha who cleverly arranged for the Guru's famous pilgrimage to Hardwar free of the usual taxes, as a compensation for the nuisance caused by these false accusations The great publicity of this pilgrimage spread the name of Sikhism throughout India

Soon after this, Jetha was bidden dig a tank at a place 25 miles away, where Guru Nanak had often camped beside a pool—a site Akbar had given to the Guru. Around it grew up a flourishing centre of trade among the sturdy Hindu peasantry, and in later times the city of Amritsar, the name Jetha had given the new tank (nectar tank), became the unquestioned religious capital for all Sikhs From the start it brought in good revenue for the Guru's funds, and Sikhs eagerly competed for the honour of digging and building there with their own hands Seven times the Guru made

Jetha rebuild and then break down again a certain platform, thus proving him by the severest test of his humility, obedience and loyalty to be worthy to sit on Guru Nanak's *gaddi* and to receive the Guru's spirit in himself

2 *Guru Rām Dās (1574-1584)*

But when Jetha was enthroned under the name of Ram Das as Guru, his predecessor's elder son Mohan refused to acknowledge him as such, holding that the title should be hereditary, as in so many Hindu *maths* Neither of the brothers helped him in the work at Amritsar, so for some time he worked there alone, and in 1577 actually founded the city on the site of Guru Nanak's hut One day he cured a leper by having him bathe in the tank, and this man and his wife then helped zealously in building shrines around the tank, both of them becoming saints

Srichand, son of the first Guru Nanak, came out of his forest retreat to visit Ram Das, in him he saw the same sweet humility as marked his own father and so recognised him as true Guru of all the Sikhs Later came the poet Bhai Gurdas, later author of the famous and all-but scriptural *vārs*, him he sent as missionary to Agra, while he bade Handal, one of his best devotees preach at Amritsar Everywhere the Guru, with great eloquence and sweetness of diction, preached pure devotion to God as the one real Friend of all; he was himself a very apostle of love When any began to

criticise the Sikhs as worldly because they lived with families, he would reply that they were immersed in the Name and that "a man may wear a yogi's garb, but without devotion in his heart God never enters it" He also taught men to think of the meaning of the hymns as they sang them and so extract the full flavour of their nectar as the bee from flowers.

Unsought, the Sikhs now received many favours from Akbar, and they often refused gifts of land and villages, never seeking anything from the rich but treating all men exactly alike This increased their prestige and also brought in many converts from the upper and wealthier classes—which helped the poorer Sikhs and greatly strengthened the community Guru Ram Das organised the collection of regular offerings from his scattered disciples, but in time these *masands* (teacher-collectors) became oppressive and dishonest

The Guru's two elder sons, Prithichand (Prithia) and Mahadev, gave pretexts not to attend a marriage at the village home in Lahore when their father asked them, they thought their interests best served by staying on the spot But Arjan, the youngest boy, gladly obeyed and stayed on in Lahore as a missionary for a long time till he should be recalled He wrote his father three letters pleading to see him again, but Prithia stopped two of these in transit When the third got through, and Prithia lied to hide his deceit, the Guru at once recalled Arjan and welcomed him in great state, at once installing him as the Fifth Guru Prithia refused to accept his younger brother and even dared to

insult the Guru, his father, so he was driven shamefully from Court It was now 1st September 1581, and Guru Ram Das-Nanak merged into his youngest son, while "his light was blended with the Light"

5. Guru Nanak V (Arjan)—Self-sacrifice

1 *Early Life* (*1563-1581*)

Arjan was the third son of Guru Ram Das, the first of the Gurus to be born "at Court". Even when he was a tiny child Guru Amar Das had once said of him, "This grandson of mine shall be a boat crossing over the sea", thus foretelling his greatness He was born on 15th April 1563 at Goindwal, and his first years were passed with the Guru and his own saintly mother Bibi Mohani When he was nearly sixteen, he alone of the sons was willing to go for the Lahore marriage, Prithia being too worldly to obey, while Mahadev claimed to have renounced the world Arjan cared very little for the luxuries around him and enjoyed only his father's presence at home, his dominant qualities were service, humility and love When he returned from Lahore after nearly three years, the Guru made him his successor and almost immediately passed away

2 *Guru Arjan* (*1581-1606*)

He spent his first seven years as Guru completing his father's tank and city at Amritsar as an act of filial

piety, personally supervising and working on the great Hari Mandir, which he insisted on keeping low to show that humility wins the truest respect of men. The foundation of the temple was laid in October 1588, and the Guru and his wife, Bibi Ganga, the daughter of Krishanchand of Meo, used secretly every night to give personal service to pilgrims who came there He promised that all who bathed in that tank would be freed from their sins On finishing the work he made great rejoicings

In spite of the Guru's generous gift to them of all his properties, Prithia and his wife Karmo still coveted the Guruship, and when Guru Arjan returned from Amritsar to Goindwal so greatly did they trouble him that he actually had to leave the place and wander abroad. Being kindly welcomed at Khara, owing to their poverty he got the peasants there exempted for one year the payment of taxes, and this naturally made the Sikhs more popular in the neighbourhood. There he had a huge tank dug, founding near the spot the city of Tarantāran, where a number of Muslim mystics and devotees came to settle Building was delayed for a while here because a certain Muslim stole the bricks The Guru then went to Khanpur, where the rich mocked his need but a very poor man named Hema most lovingly invited him in and made him his guest He moved on into Jullandhar District, and founded there on the old site the city of Kartarpur in 1593, himself cutting the first sod.

After this he settled down at Wadālı, six miles from Amritsar, where with Bhai Budha's blessing a son was

born in June 1595 This infuriated the ambitious Prithia, who had occupied Amritsar after a Pathan raid and there given himself out as the real Guru; three times this wicked man tried to kill the infant in vain In 1597 little Har Gobind nearly died of small-pox but to his father's great joy recovered Instead of entrusting his son to his second brother, the Guru sent him to Bhai Budha instead.

In 1599 the Guru went to Chhiharta to dig a big well there for the people, he then proceeded on a preaching tour to Lahore, where he built the Bauli Sahib temple at Dabbi Bazaar, where the great Akāli *satyagraha* took place in 1922-1923 He visited the aged Baba Srichand at Barath in the Gurdaspur District, and about this time also (1599-1600) he wrote his wonderful *Sukhmani*, which teaches how we must attain to peace through life itself, and not by running away from it After that he returned to Amritsar, where he spent the next four years Meanwhile Prithia continued his vile plots, he went to Delhi to slander the Guru to the Emperor, but had little success in that evil work Akbar had visited the Guru once at Amritsar and greatly admired the idea of the Hari Mandir there, he had already formed his own opinion of the Guru Nor did Arjan allow the least anger or hatred for his brother to contaminate the peace and charity of his own heart He busied himself in other ways

First, he chose missionaries from among the most loyal of his Sikhs and sent them out to all preaching centres and *sangats* from Kashmir even to Ceylon.

From the latter place he recovered Guru Nanak's *Prānsangali*, written there, but it was stolen on the way home and is not now extant. He appointed new *masands* to work in all the dioceses and to bring the Sikhs' offerings to Amritsar every year on the Vaisakh day of gathering He opened a flourishing horse-trade with Turkestan, thus by the way of adventure he greatly increased the courage and skill in riding among his Sikhs, besides ensuring a steady good revenue. Meanwhile, though wealth gathered round him and he lived as the "True King" in royal state, Arjan personally kept all his own simplicity and still despised the luxury of his surroundings Indeed in several ways these first five Sikh Gurus recall the first four Khalifs to the mind The Sikhs indeed had now become an autonomous political community, almost a "state within a state", with a good deal of power and prestige such as must awaken jealousy and suspicion in those who were ultra-loyal to the Moghul Empire

For a time this lover of peace was left in peace He used it in preparing for the world what is one of its greatest treasures, the *Guru-Granth Sahib* It happened in this way Prithia, his life's evil genius, was now forging hymns in Nanak's name as if he were the real Guru Nanak, so Guru Arjan was impelled to make an official collection of genuine hymns by Guru Nanak written in the five bodies Most of the manuscripts were with Mohan, the eldest son of the Third Guru, who was always in meditation in a closed upstairs room Neither Gurdas nor Bhai Budha had succeeded

in getting an interview with him, so Guru Arjan himself went and by singing sweet songs persuaded the recluse to hand him the manuscripts with his blessings for the work The Guru then settled with Bhai Gurdas in a shady glade at Amritsar and dictated all the songs to his disciple in order, arranging them first by the *rāg* to which they were to be sung, and then by the (humanly-speaking) author Meanwhile messengers had gone all over India to get copies of songs by many other saints which might be held suitable for including in the Holy Book, many by Kabir, Raidas, Namdev and Farid were added So at last the book was completed on the 1st day of the bright Bhadon in 1604, it was shown to the people and then kept in Bhai Budha's charge at the very centre of the Hari Mandir The Guru also gave orders that the songs be translated "into Indian and foreign languages, so that they might extend over the whole world" (*Surajprakāsh* III, 41, quoted by M) By some trick Bhai Banno made a copy for himself and to it added many other songs which the Guru had rejected and which are not accepted by Sikhs The "Granth Sahib" has been rightly called "the cream of Indian thought—the essence of Hindu Philosophy" Yet it is not "Hindu" in any sectarian sense but purely Sikh Guru Arjan called it the "Guru Granth", saying that the very essence of the Guru was incarnate in it—which is clearly true

Once the Court musicians demanded more pay; when the Guru pointed out their unreasonableness, they went home and chanted the Guru's hymns there

instead. But no one cared to listen to them, all still flocked to the Guru's presence, where ordinary Sikhs had been employed to sing for love instead of for pay.

Many conversions to Sikhism now took place, and several Hill-Rajas came into the fold But Prithia incited Chandu Shah, vizier at Lahore, to demand a marriage for his daughter with the Guru's son Guru Arjan refused this marriage proposal on the advice of the Delhi Sikhs who knew Chandu's arrogance and evil heart, the boy was married to two Sikh girls of humble birth instead Enraged at this ignoring of his veiled threats, Chandu became the Guru's enemy, he and Prithia went together to Akbar in April 1605 as soon as he returned from the frontier, to complain that the Guru's *Granth* slandered both the Prophet and the Avatars The Guru sent Bhai Budha and Gurdas to read to Akbar from the Book, and he reported that he found it "a volume worthy of reverence, full of love and devotion to God", giving gold for the Book to be honoured Akbar at this time went out of his way to call on the Guru and was charmed by his personality.

In July of that year the Guru moved back to Goindwal, and Prithia died. Unhappily, at this time Akbar also died, being replaced by the rather narrow-minded Jahāngir As Akbar had left no definite orders on the Granth Sahib or the Guru, Chandu saw a chance for further serious mischief When Khusro, Jahāngir's eldest son, had rebelled, the Guru had protected him and given him money for his flight to Kābul This was represented as sedition in the Guru, and Chandu

persuaded the new Emperor to order him first to expunge all "objectionable" passages from the Granth Sahib, and then to pay a big fine Arjan naturally refused both these demands, replying that to him all men are friends and he had helped Khusro for Akbar's sake, not for political reasons, and that the Guru Granth is the holy Word revealed by God through the Gurus and not a letter in it should be changed He added that fines are for worldly men, and certainly not for men like himself, apart from worldliness and devoted to the welfare of others Nor would he allow the Sikhs to collect or pay this fine of two lakhs of rupees, even when he was summoned to Lahore to answer the charges He appointed his little son his successor and went bravely to meet what he knew would be his death

The Emperor authorised Chandu Shah to arrest the Guru, and for several days he had him most brutally tortured in prison with boiling water, burning sand and a red-hot iron pan But in all his agony Guru Arjan was calm, loving and as firm as steel, though he proved to a Muslim saint, Mian Mir, that he had the power to destroy his torturers and suffered only to give an example of heroic patience Chandu still demanded the rejected marriage for his daughter and would have released the Guru had he consented When the Guru knew the end was near he called a passing minstrel to recite the *Japji*, in which he himself joined, then being tortured to death, his body was thrown into the River Ravi on 30th May 1606, a Friday, and so he died a

martyr to the Sikh Religion In death he found an even fuller union with his Eternal Beloved

Guru Arjan was one of the most lovable of all the Ten With sweetness he achieved in nation-building what the great warrior "Umar attained for Islam". He found the Sikhs free of caste-prejudice and devoted to their Guru, but a mere religious sect, he left them a nation, and entrusted them to a successor with orders to maintain an army but in all other respects to follow the earlier Gurus He was a great statesman, a peaceful organiser, philosopher and poet His unfailing gentleness and loving self-restraint before his spiteful elder brother would alone have shown him a true saint, his poems, a spontaneous inspired outflow, are so musical it is hard even for a foreigner to read them, they so demand to be sung He is unusually easy in his diction and never obscure, there is much repetition, but every line seems new and fresh, it is so instinct with the simplicity of creation His themes are ever love, devotion and union with the Beloved after the long agony of separation; his *Bārah Māh* and his *Sukhmanī* rank among the best of these and perhaps recall the misery of the three lonely years in Lahore before his father called him home His poems are the most extensive among the immortal poets whose work is enshrined in the Guru-Granth Sahib To hear them from his own lips that thrilled with yearning passion, playing on the melody of the *tambūr*'s soft notes as he sang to the pilgrims in the Hari Mandir at Amritsar, must have been an experience to drive the hearer into

all sanctifying love His very presence was a vast spiritual attraction, and none could be unmoved by it save the few who were inspired by Evil's very self, as it were. His toleration of personal wrongs, his humility and patience, would have won him love among the people of any nation on the earth

6. Guru Nanak VI (Har Gobind)—Justice

1 *Early Life (1595-1606)*

The new Guru was only eleven years of age, but his life had already been full of exciting incidents. He was born after many prayers to Guru Arjan and Mātā Ganga, for his mother feared lest the Guruship pass over to the line of the obviously unworthly and hostile Prithichand. To Bhai Budha, to ask him to bless her with a son, she went, but she went as a Queen with glittering equipage, and Bhai Budha refused all her gifts, sending her back to the Guru because of the pride of her display. Next time she came alone and on foot, and the old saint promised she should have a brave and famous son

The child was born on 19th June 1595 at Waḍāli, whither the Guru had retired to avoid the Pathans brought by the traitor Prithia to raid Amritsar This birth greatly disappointed and annoyed the Guru's elder brother, who sent poisoned medicine for the child, but he refused to drink, the courage of the nurse he had sent for this vile deed also failed her and she confessed

the plot Next he sent a cobra, which the child killed. Even after the child recovered from small-pox in 1597, he tried again, by bribing a servant to give poison, but the child again refused to drink it, while the servant confessed and then died of colic

Guru Arjan then thought to send the child for safety to his second brother Mahadev, but when his friends warned him that this man also was not to be trusted he sent him to Bhai Budha to bring up instead, and under that revered patriarch he learned with wonderful ease and speed. Guru Arjan, before going to his death at Lahore, installed his little son as Guru, bidding him keep armed forces but never to abandon the good practices of his predecessors

2. *Guru Har Gobind (1606-1644)*

On the news of Guru Arjan's passing, Bhai Budha formally enthroned the new Guru, who had the Granth Sahib chanted for ten days in his father's honour and first appeared in full military insignia He at once enrolled a small army and a personal bodyguard of armed men, sending messages to the *masands* that the usual gifts of money should be replaced by weapons and horses He took to hunting and martial instead of devotional songs, which greatly pleased most of his Sikhs, who were longing for revenge on the murderers of their Guru When old Bhai Budha protested against this, the Guru replied that hereafter there should be the free Kitchen for the poor and a sword for those

who oppressed and impoverished them   So he maintained great state, having over 800 horses and a splendid retinue of well-equipped soldiers   Yet though he preferred hunting and manly sports to poetry and meditation, the Guru was still a great teacher, in his own way, and it is even said of him that "he rained instruction like clouds in Sravan, and the Sikhs flourished under it like thirsty paddy-fields"

Chandu Shah was furious at this change in Sikh life, and still more so when the Guru boldly answered his threats   He complained to the Emperor, who summoned the Guru to court, though the Sikhs begged him not to go, Har Gobind took three hundred men with him and went to Delhi in 1612, leaving Bhai Budha and Bhai Gurdas in charge   He was welcomed with respect by the Emperor Jahangir, and joined him in hunting, having once the fortune to save his life from a tiger   He took the Guru on a visit to Kashmir. On the way they visited the sons of Guru Amar Das at Goindwal and the temple at Amritsar together. Many of the Sikhs, supported even by his own mother, had refused him money for buildings, disapproving of his present policies   They went to Lahore also, where the saint Mian Mir showed great reverence to Gurudev. A Muslim lady, Kaulan, became a Sikh and gave all her wealth, which was used by the Guru in digging the tank of Kaulsar   Meanwhile Prithia's son Mihrban, and Chandu's son poisoned the mind of Prince Jahan against the Guru, in spite of the pleading of the Sikhs for them to desist   The Guru then visited the venerable

son of Guru Nanak, Baba Srichand, who must by this time have been about 125 years old, having been born in 1497 At Pilibhit, the Guru miraculously restored to life the burnt pipal tree under which Guru Nanak used to sit, even though the yogis tried to drive him away from the place.

Guru Har Gobind's eldest son Gurditta, born in the autumn of 1613, was exactly like Guru Nanak in appearance and also in his great love of humility. Later Baba Srichand adopted this lad and made him the heir to the headship over his own "Udasis" On a brief visit to two devotees in Kashmir the Guru converted many to Sikhism, then he went to Baramula and by way of Gujrat to Lahore, where he married a third wife, at this time most of the family alliances were with poor and obscure Sikhs He visited Talwandi, Guru Nanak's birthplace, and when his mother died he had her body thrown in a river like Guru Arjan's

All went well enough until one day a Sikh took the Emperor for the Guru and in that belief gave him royal titles This gave Chandu Shah his chance, and he did not rest until Jahangir had the Guru interned on false charges in the Gwalior Fort, where he was so kind to the other captives that he won all their hearts In vain did Chandu try to get him murdered there, while the Sikhs outside were labouring for his release. Three long years went by, and the Guru would not go free till he had all the other royal prisoners freed first, himself standing surety for them.

Then the Emperor handed over Chandu to be punished by the Sikhs, he was shoebeaten, covered with filth and paraded about until at last some grain parcher killed him, perhaps out of pity for his wretched state. This is the first case where we hear of the Sikhs seeking or taking revenge for their wrongs Guru Har Gobind became a friend of the Prince Dara Shikoh, who had a liking for saints, and visited him several times at Lahore This greatly displeased many of the Sikhs, who dared to criticise the Guru to his face for so associating with Muslims [1] while neglecting hymns and devotions for the pleasures of the chase

The long-threatened trouble with the Empire began in 1628. Some Sikhs captured the Emperor's hawk and killed a few of his soldiers, Mukhlis Khan was sent with troops to arrest the Guru by Shāh Jahān, who had now succeeded his father and was an enemy of Har Gobind and the Sikhs. There was a fierce battle with the Moghul troops at *Wadāli*, the Guru himself fought like a tiger, and the Moghuls were driven off With his own hands the Guru cremated the Sikhs who had fallen in his defence Jahan was furious, but Wazir Khan, an old friend of the Sikhs, dissuaded him from taking revenge.

The Guru spent that rainy season at Ruhela on the River Beas, and there built a new city, which he called after himself *Sri Hargobindpur* His enemies brought here an army of ten thousand men and attacked, but were driven back with great slaughter Bhai Budha

[1] He even built a mosque for them once

after this battle came to the Guru, took his leave, drank water from his feet, and passed away, more than a century after his first coming to Guru Nanak, and at the age of about 108 Baba Srichand passed away at about the same time, shortly after he adopted the little lad Gurditta

The Guru's fourth son, Atal Rai, began to work miracles, raising his dead friend Mohand and when the little boy of eight saw how displeased his father was at this he went to the temple and there died Gurditta founded the city of Kiratpur, later to be famous in Sikh history. The Guru made at this time several pilgrimages, meeting distant relatives and aged devotees

For some time Shah Jahan sought pretext aginst the Guru, while Wazir Khan persuaded him that a man who built a mosque could be no enemy of Islam But at last in 1631 a rather discreditable incident over the stealing of horses meant for the Guru and recovered for him by craft from the imperial stables, led to a punitive expedition, which was defeated at *Lahra* or *Gurusar*, though at the cost of 1200 Sikh lives The Guru retired to Kartarpur, where a quarrel soon followed with Painda Khan, a brave but boastful officer of his

In 1634 Painda persuaded the Emperor to send fifty thousand men under Kale Khan to *Jullandhar* with envoys to the Guru When an envoy began to insult Guru Nanak, the Sikhs gave him a shoebeating, and a fight began which ended in a great victory for the Sikhs at the cost of heavy losses, Painda himself being slain by the Guru's own hand and Gurditta slaying his own

boyhood friend This so grieved the young man that he resolved to give up war for ever,[1] but using psychic powers in some miracle shortly afterwards he incurred his father's displeasure and at once gave up his life like his younger brother; this was in 1638

Dhirmal, the Guru's grandson, son of Gurditta, had turned traitor before the last battle and now refused to go humbly to receive the Guruship from Har Gobind's hand, feeling himself the natural heir and entitled to the honour So Guru Har Gobind nominated Dhirmal's younger brother Har Rai instead. When his third wife died, whom he loved dearly, the Guru turned ascetic and became gentle and meditative, retiring to live in peace at Kiratpur Indeed we must admit that all the fighting he took part in during life was in self-defence, yet the character of the Guruship had already made that change which is so often ascribed only to Guru Gobind Singh. It had become a military monarchy as well as a religious sect

Dhirmal continued to defy his grandfather, the Guru and even when on his mother's advice he at last visited Court he boasted there of his friendship with the Moghul Emperor and seated himself also on a throne beside the Guru Bhai Budha's son was called and put the *tilak* on the brow of Har Rai, the spirit of Guru Nanak changed bodies once again, Guru Har Gobind

[1] This Baba Gurditta was asked in 1636 to appoint four preachers, whom he invested with his own strange dress, resembling that of the First Guru, their names were Almast, Phul, Gonda and Balu Hasna, and they founded the four *dhuans*, or hearths and proved zealous missionaries, co-operating with the other orders: Nirmalas, Bakhshishes, etc

retired on 3rd March 1644,[1] and bidding farewell to his Sikhs died.

He too, like his great father, was always calm though not rarely betrayed by those to whom he had shown his kindness Though it is true his somewhat romantic temperament led him into ways different from those of his predecessors, it seems clear to us now that the One Guru Nanak willed through his body to prepare the Sikhs to become a manly fighting nation It was not till nearly a century later when, under Guru Gobind and the great Banda, the full shape was given to this creative idea, but it too was also in its turn the natural sequel to the gradually developing wealth and organisation under the first five Gurus Guru Har Gobind, whose life is given in the *Gur Bilās*, had not only to avenge his father and to teach the Muslims respect for the Sikh power, but he had to begin the work of liberating the masses so long oppressed by a cruel, corrupt and bloody tyranny He led Sikhs who were athirst to give their lives for their Religion and to this end, as Guru Arjan had already given his, and he led them well

7. Guru Nanak VII (Har Rai)—Mercy

1. *Early Life* (*1630-1644*)

The Seventh Guru was born to Gurditta, Guru Har Gobind's eldest son, on 16th January 1630, and even

[1] Others say 1645

when only a tiny child he was noted for his gentle and religious disposition. As a boy he was never seen to pick flowers or even to break off a leaf, and he was also very gentle with animals; he loved to walk alone under the trees, and there he would be rapt for hours in meditation. Possibly his father's sweetness of temperament which had so attracted the venerable Sri Chand had to some extent come down to him also. Later on, when he joined his father in the chase, he delighted in bringing back the animals alive instead of killing them, and he made a little zoo in a corner of the Guru's garden. He took great joy also in being hospitable to guests, and this characteristic remained with him all through his life. He was always peace-loving and ever sought quiet places.

2. *Guru Har Rai* (*1644-1661*)

He was only fourteen when he ascended the Guru's *gaddi*, and he continued his peaceful life of strict self-discipline. He was always very kind and gentle with devotees, whose needs he clairvoyantly came to know from a distance. he preferred the coarse food of the poor given him with love to the richest delicacies of the proud. He peacefully converted several important families to Sikhism, and though he has left us no hymns of his own, he was fond of quoting those of the first five Gurus in apt ways. He taught his disciples to seek happiness in pondering on the Gurus' words, which alone could lead them to the path of devotion,

saintliness and liberation. Even those who could not easily understand the purport of the hymns need not be disconsolate, for, said he, "the hymns have value even if not understood, for they bear fruit at the hour of death". The very melody, listened to with reverence, purifies the heart from sin. With such utmost reverence did the Guru himself treat the Granth Sahib that he always rose to his feet when a devotee began to recite from it.

For most of his reign he lived at Kiratpur, and he was a popular teacher of religion there, though with non-Sikhs he was somewhat reserved. Once he went to Kartarpur to visit his brother Dhirmal, and once he went to Mukandpur, where he planted a bamboo which was still living at least in 1909. The Guru avoided meddling with politics, but on occasion his Sikhs got involved in fighting. He had once cured the prince Dara Shikoh of poison administered by Aurangzeb, and Shah Jahan vowed eternal friendship with him on this account. As soon as Jahan died in 1658, Aurangzeb drove his brother Dara away, and the prince sought the Guru's help. The Guru promised him salvation but could not promise victory or the crown. When Dara Shikoh had to retreat from the River Beas, the Guru sent a small Sikh force there to cover his friend's flight, but eventually Dara was captured and executed. The cruel and tyrannous Aurangzeb then sent for Guru Har Rai to explain why he had thus helped his enemy. It seemed that the story of Guru Arjan and Khusro was to be repeated.

The Guru refused to obey the summons of a man who was openly vowing to destroy Hinduism, and as the officer whom he had sent to arrest and bring him died, Aurangzeb thought it politic to ask the Guru respectfully to visit him This too the Guru would not do himself, but he sent his elder son Ramrai to represent his case at the Emperor's court This young man worked miracles there to display his own greatness, and even dared to change a line in the *Guru Granth Sahib* to flatter the Muslims and so please the Emperor. When the Guru heard of this he said, "The Guruship is like tiger's milk and can only be held in a golden cup Ramrai is not worthy of it, let him not see my face again but stay with Aurangzeb and amass money there."

Hearing of his banishment, Ramrai became like most elder sons of the Gurus, a bitter enemy; Guru Har Rai refused to forgive him or take him back even when Dhirmal pleaded on his behalf, and in order to avoid a quarrel he left the place where he was and went back to Kiratpur Having duly enthroned his younger son as Guru, bidding the Sikhs look on the child as his own image and put all faith in him, Guru Har Rai passed away on 6th October 1661, his "light blending with the Light"

8. Guru Nanak VIII (Har Krishan)—Purity

1 *Early Life* (*1656-1661*)

This young child was already showing signs of a sweet and docile spirit, and of a clear insight into

religious thought, it is said that though born only on 7th July 1656 he was even then able to clear the doubts of Sikhs who came to him when he was just five

2 *Guru Har Krishan (1661-1664)*

At this very early age he was called to lead and to teach the wide-spread and vigorous Sikh community He did his work well He sent out missionaries to the furthest outposts of the Religion, and himself taught with all confidence those who asked him of the truth. But his elder brother Ramrai had himself proclaimed Guru in rivalry to him, as no one paid much heed to his claims he went off to Aurangzeb to complain against his father's injustice in disinheriting the elder son In this quarrel the Emperor saw a good means of creating dissension and so destroying the Sikhs, so he sent a polite message to the Guru, inviting him for a visit to Delhi. While appointing him, his father had warned the little Guru never to let Aurangzeb meet him, but as the Delhi Sikhs longed for his *darśan* he consented to visit the capital, but not to see the Emperor Raja Jai Singh of Amber, who had been sent to fetch him, agreed to these terms, so the party set out for Delhi, on the road there the very sight of the Guru healed many sick folk who went to see him as he passed There was a Brahmin proud of his caste, the Guru taught him humility by putting divine wisdom into a passing water-carrier, and thus showed how all men are equally

God's children and able to be enlightened by His grace

When he reached Delhi he sent Aurangzeb a message that he was quite willing Ramrai should take over all the political and organizing sides of the Guruship, but Ramrai was furious at the suggested compromise and demanded the integral Guruship for himself at once While the Guru stayed in Delhi plague was raging in the city, and he healed many people of the dread disease merely by a few words or by the very sight of him He again refused to meet the Emperor in person, but sent him a copy of one of Guru Nanak's hymns as a message, which Aurangzeb is said to have approved

Somehow, though, the Guru was persuaded to show off his powers before Jai Singh by picking out the head queen, the very next day he developed smallpox, which soon ravaged his fair young body The Sikhs around him begged him to stay with them at least until he could appoint his successor, but he replied, "Gurus may die, but their heart, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, shall remain with you" (M 4· 327) He comforted his weeping mother by keeping the Holy Name always on his lips, and showing her how absolutely unafraid of death we should always be When asked who would be the next Guru, he answered only, "Bābā Bākale", by which they understood rightly that he was to be found in the village of Bākala He forbade any to mourn for him, and passed away happily on 30th March 1664, repeating the Name

9. Guru Nanak IX (Tegh Bahadur)—Calmness

1 *Early Life* (*1621-1664*)

Tegh Bahadur, youngest son of Guru Har Gobind, was born at 2 15 a m on 1st April 1621 (though M. says 1622), he was so named because the Guru foresaw he would be powerful to endure the sword (*tegh*). Even at the age of five, the little boy used to enjoy ecstatic trance (*samādhi*), and his father prophesied he would some day come to Guruship and that his son would in turn be even more glorious and break the power of tyranny in India When Tegh was about seven, he was married to Bibi Gūjari, he continued his quiet life of solitude with his little wife and his mother, meditating often on God and on the sorrows of the Indian people So the years passed

Tegh rarely showed himself to others, and it was with difficulty the Sikh envoys traced him out in his remote village retreat when directed thither by the dying words of the boy Guru There were twenty-one rival claimants to the *gaddi*, but none of them showed any of the qualities to be looked for in the heir of Nanak till the envoy came to Tegh Nor did Tegh himself do a thing to push himself forward, rather protesting his unworthiness for so high a place The envoys hailed him Guru, and most of the other claimants faded at once from the picture

2 *Guru Tegh Bahadur* (*1664-1675*)

A friend of Dhirmal, the old claimant, shot Tegh, but the wound was not serious and the new Guru refused to punish the assailant, thus teaching what joy is in forgiveness and how evil is revenge. When he came to *Amritsar*, the Sikh capital, the Sikh "priests" there closed the doors of the Temple against him, but the whole crowd came out to where he quietly sat at *Walla*, singing the Guru's hymns. When he returned home, he made the Sikhs restore the original Granth Sahib to Dhirmal's custody.

Personally, the Guru was a simple, kindly and humble man, and though he kept up a magnificent royal state so as to uphold the dignity of the Guru and the Panth, he was never so happy as when he could slip away into retirement and there remain absorbed in God. He was always conscious of the unreality of this worldly show, and the sufferings of the poor, nay, the pains of all created things, always filled his tender heart with pity, but he combined that pity with a lion heart of courage which made great self-sacrifice possible for him. In his own hymns there is the keynote of renunciation of the world's illusory delights and a regret that so few ever cared to look beyond their veil to the Reality behind, but he combined this "pessimism" with passionate devotion to God and the knowledge that one must be ceaselessly aware of the world around and its needs. Typical of his attitude is the verse given us by M: "Shed your tears for the sorrows of the world, but

make them into a rosary for the repeating of God's Name!"

In 1665 he founded his new capital a little way from Kiratpur at a place called *Anandpur*, but he did not spend much time there himself. Ramrai again claimed the Guruship, and Tegh moved to *Mulawala* in Patiala, where he turned bitter water sweet, to *Handiaya*, where he ended an epidemic fever, and so on into South Punjab—being everywhere welcomed with reverence and working various kinds of miracles here and there, so the historians tell us. He dug several wells and preached against the newly introduced and growing use of tobacco. Then he went to *Kurukshetra*, where he was honourably received, and visited *Prayag* and *Banaras*, at *Sahasrawan* he occupied a palace a devotee had built long before for his use. At *Gaya* he refused to offer *pinda*, like the first Guru Nanak, and at *Patna* he left his mother and wife, so that the coming child of promise might be born there.

Meanwhile Ramrai had got Aurangzeb to call the Guru to *Delhi*, so as to break his "ambitious plans", there he was lodged with Raja Ram Singh of Amber, who pleaded with and satisfied the Emperor about his loyalty. So he accompanied the Raja on his eastern campaign, preaching to and organizing the Sikhs in every place he visited. When he came to *Dhakka* he was welcomed there with loving enthusiasm, and in *Assam* he made such a complete conquest of the Kamrup King's heart that he submitted to the Empire and war was avoided.

At this point came news that a son was born to the Guru, so he hastened back to *Patna* to see the baby Gobind Rai Here he lived quietly for some time with his family, encouraging the child in all manly sports and skills. Then in spite of his mother's pleading to remain at Patna he left to see his Sikhs in the *Punjab*, where little Gobind soon joined him. After a while the Guru again visited *Banaras, Ayodhya, Lakhnau* and the *Ambala* District, and then returned to *Kiratpur* and *Anandpur.* Everywhere the Guru and his young son were equally admired and loved.

Aurangzeb now began to work out his definite scheme of converting all Hindus by means of bribes and cruel tyranny, starting the new policy in Kashmir with brutal massacres and forced conversions The Kashmir pandits went to Anandpur to appeal for help from Tegh Bahadur The Guru replied that no one could free the land from such tyranny unless he were ready to die; the boy Gobind heard this and at once broke in: "You are the most worthy for that!" The Guru agreed, so he told the Kashmiris to tell Aurangzeb that if he first converted the Sikh Guru they would all embrace Islam. This message filled Aurangzeb's heart with joy, for he thought it was a condition easy to fulfil He sent at once for Tegh Bahadur to come to his court

The Guru girded his sword on young Gobind Rai and declared him the next Guru, bidding him destroy tyranny in true revenge for his father's imminent death (cf. GGS 1 1 and 53 1-2) Then he left Anandpur, in order to pass the rainy season with a Muslim friend

at *Saifabad* The Emperor's envoys could not find him at home, nor was he at Amritsar, so they reported that he had fled; Aurangzeb at once ordered his arrest. Taking with him five Sikhs,[1] the Guru moved slowly towards Delhi, everywhere prophesying the fall of the Moghul Empire At *Agra* he waited quietly to be arrested.

Aurangzeb demanded that he embrace either Islam or death, but his words were final "The Prophet of Mecca who founded your Religion could not impose one religion on the world, so how can you? It is not God's will" He then showed that all three, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, would survive together He was closely imprisoned until he should change his mind, time and again they tortured him and then asked him to turn apostate, but again and again he refused Maticās, one of his "five" followers, was martyred for urging that Islam should be destroyed—they sawed his body in two while he was repeating the *Japji* Three others were released and fled, only Gurditta, of Bhai Bucha's family, stayed with the Guru, who sent a consoling message to his own family that they should not grieve on his account His son replied with a copy of the 54th Sloka. *balu hoa bandhana chu'e sabha kichu hota upāi* | *Nānaka sabha kichu tumarai hātha mai tuma hī hota sahāi* || The Guru in return sent orders for the immediate installation of his son as Guru with the usual rites and offerings.

[1] It is interesting how often the earlier Gurus thus foreshadowed the actions of their successors, here we have the prototype of Guru Gobind Singh's "*panc piāre*" and his promise in GGS 54: 7.

Once more they tried, and once more the Guru refused to consider apostasy, they sentenced him to be beheaded in the Chandni Chauk While he recited the *Japji*, the execution took place The wind blew sand into the eyes of the Moghuls present under the banyan tree, which is still extant, the Guru's head flew into the lap of the Sikh messenger, who hurried with it back to Anandpur for cremation. It was a Thursday afternoon on 11th November 1675 Some faithful low-caste Sikhs hid the body for some time in their own humble village, and there it was burned: over where the ashes were buried the shrine of Rakabgunj was built

This brutal murder affected even Aurangzeb's mind, and he soon repented of what he had done, never really regaining peace of mind It turned all the Sikhs of the Punjab into a fiery nation thirsting for revenge and inflamed with hatred for the Muslims Thus in his death the Guru became the brand which set North India alight

10. Guru Nanak X (Gobind Singh)—Royal Courage

1. *Early Life* (*1666-1675*)

Guru Gobind Singh was the fifth Guru who had acceded before the age of twenty, and in some ways he may be regarded as almost as original as the First Guru Nanak himself. Yet it is possible to exaggerate the

novelty in his innovations, for almost all of them were at least foreshadowed or led up to by his predecessors, he led the Sikhs further along the path to nationhood than Guru Nanak I, Guru Arjan or Guru Har Gobind had done, so much it is correct to say, but we should not say much more than that Circumstances in the country had changed greatly, India was under the ruthless bigotry of Aurangzeb, and there was no constitution which could protect her people from his brutalities Under him Hindus had no legal rights, their temples were burned, and they themselves subject at any moment to forcible conversion, massacre or at the least heavy poll-tax and fines There was nothing else to do but to submit like cowards or to resist like men, the Guru was forced into resistance by the incessant attacks of jealous Hill Rājas, who could not tolerate the rise of Sikhism beside them, he used violence and the sword, as the surgeon when all other means have failed takes up the knife The evil of the day could be combated only in that way.

The child, Gobind Rai, was born at Patna on 19th December 1668 according to the usual Sikh reckoning (M would put it in 1666) He was a playful and lovable child, brave and active, and very early showed a love of fighting, complete fearlessness, and eagerness to use the catapult The strong sense of humour which played in Nanak himself, showed in the Tenth Guru's always sporting with his disciples, even in the greatest crises of his life In 1673 his mother took him to join Guru Tegh Bahadur in the Punjab, and he travelled

with the Guru to many places in what is now Uttar Pradesh. All who saw him admired his beauty and his noble bearing; they recognised him as a child of destiny as they watched him arranging sham fights among his boy playmates. Crowds came out from every town to see and admire him. It was he who suggested to his father the noble act of self-sacrifice by which he won respite for the Kashmiri Brahmins at the price of his own life; and when the Guru was in jail and about to be beheaded he sent him a verse which encouraged him in his martyrdom.

When the news arrived of his father's death and his own accession, the Sikh bringing the Guru's head secretly to Anandpur, it was the young Guru who himself lit the pyre and consoled the Sikhs while he performed the customary rites. It was early next year, 1676, when the son of Gurditta of Bhai Budha's line formally enthroned him as Guru.

2 *Guru Gobind Singh (1676-1708)*

At first the Guru remained more or less in retirement; he was very young (eight years old) and knew that he must prepare for the work God had given him to do. He lived quietly for some years at Anandpur, practising archery and riding, so as to fit his body for the strenuous fighting to which it was destined. His mind too became suited to a soldier, he became arrogant and boastful, and when his mother Gūjari and her brother Kripāl scolded him for this, saying it was for the Guru to be

humble and pious rather than forceful and quarrelsome, he replied quietly but with decided firmness that he would never use his sword save in self-defence and, in effect, that he knew his own business best In 1677 he married Jito, the daughter of Bhikhia, a Sikh from Lahore, she was later known as Sundari because of her beauty. His army grew, many Muslims and Hindus joining him as well as the Sikhs, and he waited for the hour to strike Meanwhile he perfected his knowledge of Sanskrit and Persian and called fifty-two poets to his court, employing them on translating the *Purānas* and Epics into Brajbhasha verse, so that the stories of heroism in them might inspire his own people for the coming war He himself slowly came to the conviction that he was sent to the world to free the Hindus from tyranny as Krishna fought the Rākshasas in his day His own writing of Hindi poetry became so skilled that he is rightly regarded as one of the very greatest masters in Hindi literature It was during these days that he wrote his greatest poems, the *Jāpu Sahib*, the *Akāl Ustat*, and the *Sawwaiyas*, perhaps in 1683-1685

In 1684 he went to the Nahan State to live with his friend Raja Medni Parkash, and he hunted much in the hill forests at that time He even killed a tiger with one stroke of his sword, we learn, and the frequent hunting gave him great skill in riding and strength of body. Another of his good friends at the time was Raja Fāteh Shāh of Srinagar One day Rāmrāi, his second cousin, visited him to complain against being harassed by the *masands*, this former claimant to the

Guruship was still the leader of a small and decaying group of adherents at Dehra Dun. One day he was in a trance, and the *masands* took this as an excuse for having him cremated alive (1685), perhaps they fancied the Guru would approve, but he punished them for trying to exploit the situation and consoled the widow, Panjāb Kaur. At this time the Guru also founded a fortress on the Jamna bank: it was called Paunta Sāhib.

Raja Fātch Shāh invited the Guru to the marriage of his daughter with Raja Bhimchand's son, now this Raja of Kahlur, the strongest of the Hill Chiefs, was very jealous of the Guru's growing power and popularity, and when the Guru refused to lend the white elephant presented him by the Raja of Assam he became the Guru's avowed enemy. As Gobind Singh felt his meeting the hostile Raja might spoil the marriage festivities, he sent Divan Nand Chand with costly wedding gifts for the princess.

Raja Bhimchand sent the Guru a message demanding that he vacate the fortress and get out of the way of his son's army and marriage procession, lest the two armies clash. The guru allowed the procession to pass that way, but would not let the Raja's army pass, so that it had to go by another route. This further enraged the Raja, who began to seek excuse for fighting the Guru. On his way back from the marriage he excited against the Guru twenty-one other Rajas who had attended it. The procession went to Bilaspur by a different route, but the Hill Rajas collected their forces and marched

upon Paunta Sahib, where the Guru dwelt This was on 5th May 1687

As advised by his friend and admirer, Sayyid Budhu Shah, the Guru had employed five hundred Pathan soldiers, whom Aurangzeb had dismissed and whom no one would engage for fear of incurring the Emperor's anger. But as soon as the Hill Rajas attacked the Guru at Bhāngani, these mercenary Pathans deserted his service, but at this time Pir Budhu Shah of Sadaura, a Muslim Saint, came up with seven hundred men just in time.

After a fierce fight the Guru won a decided victory, and in October Bhimchand made peace The Guru, his happy relations with the hillmen having been broken, returned to live in Anandpur

3. *At Anandpur, Days of Peace (1687-1700)*

It was not all peace even there In 1689 Alaf Khan, the Nawab of Jammu, demanded tribute from the Hill Rajas; Bhimchand refused to give anything, and asked the Guru's help Gobind Rai was unable to refuse chivalrous aid to anyone who asked him, so he sent his forces to help Bhimchand win a victory at *Nadauna*. But next year, 1690, the same Bhimchand took help from Dilawar Khan in a treacherous attack on the Guru, which was driven back in the battle at *Hussaini*. The Guru was then left for some time in peace

He made Anandpur the centre of a literary movement, his pandits were labouring at translation work,

and as Raghunāth Pandit refused to teach Sanskrit to the Sikhs, who were of all castes, the Guru sent five young men to Banaras to learn it there After a few years they returned and then began to teach Sanskrit to all who cared to learn, these were the first "Nirmalas", who lived pure ascetic lives devoted to study and teaching of the Sikh religion in a somewhat Hinduised form.

Once the *masands* tried to cheat him and were angry when he knew their deceitfulness, he decided to abolish this order Then they threatened to join Dhirmal, the Guru's enemy, elder brother of Guru Har Rai, and he punished many of them for their extortion and dishonesty. Bhai Pheru, who showed great humility to the Guru, was forgiven and honoured, being entrusted with teaching the district between the Beas and the Ravi.

In 1695 the Guru set himself to the swift building of a nation, the Hindus were too mild and modest, too desireless, too resigned to fate or the results of their own "karma", and had to be stung and encouraged into a braver and more vigorous attitude to life. This aim the Guru achieved by means of his daily teachings, and the special methods we shall read about shortly. In such ways he replaced devotion and piety by manly valour and pugnacity, implanting in every Sikh the heart of a lion and a self-respect which soon earned them the respect of others

When Bābā Nandchand stole a beautiful copy of the Guru Granth Sāhib from the Udasis, the Guru ordered him to restore it at once, he defied the order and fled

to Kartarpur, where Dhirmal killed him The Guru did many strange things in those days, so that those who could not understand began to doubt if he were wholly sane. Thus, to teach simplicity and hardihood to his Sikhs, he once burned all the costly cloths he could find in Anandpur, and threw much treasure into the river Sutlej He introduced the wearing of long hair among his warriors and taught all Sikhs to carry arms at all times He organised a great arms factory at Anandpur, making swords and daggers in plenty. Then to make fun of the Hindu sacrifices he once sacrificed an ass instead of a cow at Thāneśwar The Brahmins were unwilling to join his armies, saying they could win victories only if the goddess Durga were first appeased He playfully agreed to this, and for nine months kept up the farce of elaborate sacrifices to Durga, just to show how futile such things are When the goddess did not put in an appearance, the priest became afraid of the Guru's anger, and offered the pretext that perhaps a human sacrifice was necessary. The Guru promptly suggested that the purest and most welcome sacrifice would obviously be the priest himself, whereupon the poor Brahmin at once made himself scarce. The Guru then threw the remains of the offerings into the fire, in the terrific blaze he showed himself with drawn sword, saying, "Here is the Durga who shall win us the victory!"

It was in the next year to this striking incident, 1699, that the Guru asked all the Sikhs to come for the great annual Vaisakh Fair On 29th March he carpeted and

screened off a mound, the crowds camped there that night Very early in the morning the Guru rose, and after his usual ablutions and devotions, he put on his martial uniform and weapons All the crowds were seated before the mound Suddenly the Guru drew his sword, looked very fierce, and demanded, "If there be any true Sikh of mine here, let him give me his head as a proof!" Three times he repeated the terrible invitation for someone to die for him on the spot before at last one Sikh, Dayarām of Lahore, stood up and offered his life for his Guru Gobind Rai led him inside the enclosure, and shortly afterwards came out with the sword dripping blood. He again called for a sacrifice, his eyes and face getting redder and fiercer, and one by one the bravest of the Sikhs stepped forward to die, as they thought, on the spot, and he led each of them inside the enclosure, later coming out alone with a dripping sword Meanwhile some of the Sikhs ran in terror to Gūjarī, the Guru's mother, crying that her son had gone mad and was murdering all his disciples Some simply ran away from the place in blind panic

Then he robed the five first volunteers and brought them out before the crowds Dayarām, Dharmdās, Muhkamchand, Sāhibchand and Himmat. He called them his "Five Beloveds" (*panc piāre*), saying, "Brothers, you are now in my form and I am in yours, there is no difference at all between us now" Then he seated them there before the crowds and spoke to all, "These five Sikhs who are totally devoted to the Guru shall refound Sikhism and spread its fame over the whole

world." The disciples cheered and envied the favoured five.

The Guru next replaced the old custom of drinking water poured on the Guru's feet (*caranāmrta*) with a new kind of nectar Putting water in an iron bowl, he stirred it with a two-edged sword while repeating *Japji*, *Chaupai* and some of his own *Sawwaiyas* At that moment Sahib Kaur, his spiritual spouse[1] whom he declared to be the mother of all Sikhs, passed by with some sweets; he told her to throw the sweets into the bowl, that the Sikhs who drank of it might be united in sweet comradeship, he was begetting his disciples, and she might be their mother through this offering. Then as he bade the Five, each of them drank five handfuls of the sweetened water, five times he sprinkled the "nectar" on the hair and eyes of each, and he taught them to repeat with each handful his new *mantra*: "*Vāhigurūjī kā Khālsā, Vāhigurūjī kī fāteh*!" He then called them *Singhs* (lions), changing their names thus; he also gave them the "Five K's" (long hair and beard, comb, knickers, ring on right arm, and sword in hand), and taught them to be full of courage and chivalry, never to turn the back to a foe, never to leave the poor and helpless unaided Hereafter their former caste was washed away, they were all brothers, sons of the one Guru, and they should look on all brother Sikhs as

[1] Prof Jodh Singh explains it thus "She was presented to him as his wife by her parents, but by that time in preparation for his wars he had taken the vow of Brahmacharya (*chastity*) But as the parents insisted, and the girl prayed that she did not want anything else but to be allowed to remain with him to serve him, he permitted her to do so and declared Khalsa to be her son"

their own family, having no contact with renegades or apostates, with idols or Hindu shrines

Then the Guru folded his hands, and stood suppliant before his disciples, and prayed them to baptize him also in the same way When they naturally demurred he said, "I have acted on God's order in thus making you five of the new Khālsā as Guru of the Sikhs; it is proper for you now to let me join you as one among you" So he received baptism at their hands

After this, he said to all the Sikhs present, "The Lord can be seen by the eyes of faith in the general body of the Khālsā, taking your motto as Unity and Courage, you too may join the Khālsā" The next batch of five were Rāmsingh, Devasingh, Tahilsingh, Īsharsingh and Fātehsingh, whom he called the "Five Liberated Ones" (*panc mukte*), thousands followed, coming up in batches of five, and the Khalsa grew mightily—to the great anger of orthodox Hindus, who were furious at the ending of caste-slavery among so many and the uplifting of Harijans to the level of Brahmin converts The Guru invited the Hill Rājas to join his new Khalsa Order, but they refused and consulted together on how to deal with this new menace to their established order

It was about this time the Guru ordered that every Sikh house with four adult male members should give two to the Khalsa, thus he raised an army of 80,000 men He gave almost daily speeches instilling brotherhood, equality, the highest bravery and ethics among the Sikhs He also practised what he preached He

used at times to visit the Guru's Kitchen in disguise, and so he learned with what contempt the cooks treated poor and destitute comers In this and other such ways he maintained justice and equality, laying down very strict rules that the free Kitchen was open to *all* comers, and not even only to Sikhs He was always apt and able to teach or warn through the verses of the earlier Gurus and his own, gave detailed prophecies of history up to the war of 1857-8, and approved of all songs which did not actually lead the mind away from God, by no means keeping to religious and pious songs He went on with his hunting to keep the body fit, and with his recruitment of soldiers ready for the war which he knew well was imminent

4. *Last Days in Anandpur* (*1700-1704*)

In 1700 it began The Hill Rajas planned to destroy the Sikh power before it grew too strong, they went to complain against the Guru to the Emperor at Delhi, and Aurangzeb sent armies to help them under Din Beg and Painda Khan The Guru put his Five *Piāras* in charge of his own forces There was a severe fight, in which Painda Khan was killed Then the Rajas demanded that the Guru should pay a rent for the site of Anandpur, which he of course refused They made two vain attempts to storm the city and then besieged it for two months Disliking this violence in the Guru, Dunichand left him with his men, but was killed by a

cobra at Amritsar After one more sharp fight, the Rajas withdrew from Anandpur for the season

In 1701 they again got help from Aurangzeb, urged to activity by the increasing number of Sikh recruits and converts and the failure of an attempt to murder the Guru The forces of the Emperor drove him across the Sutlej at Kirtipur, where the Guru rested and hunted for some time till he could quietly reoccupy Anandpur In spite of the unwillingness of Raja Ajmerchand, son of Bhimchand, the other Rajas made peace with the Guru at a fair, but his complete breach with orthodox Hinduism and his continued teaching of courage against all foes, together with unity and fellowship among themselves, made them feel the peace with the Sikhs would only be brief

Indeed, next year Ajmerchand renewed the war with the help of Alif Khan of Jammu, they furiously attacked Anandpur, but the attack failed when first Saiyad Beg and then Alif Khan himself joined the Sikhs Another attack by Ajmerchand alone also failed, and when he retreated the Guru made a total separation from all Hindu and Muslim customs alike, condemning all free association with non-Sikhs

In 1703 the Emperor sent Saiyad Khan's army to help the Hill Rajas totally to crush the Guru. Against heavy odds the Guru fought with great heroism, so that the enemy general actually prostrated to him in admiration, but he had to evacuate the city Yet the Sikhs soon recaptured all the booty they had lost and re-entered Anandpur. When Aurangzeb proposed peace,

the Guru scolded him roundly for oppressing the Hindus and unjustly warring upon the peaceful Sikhs.

In 1704 the jealous Hill Rajas again complained to the Emperor against the Sikhs as disturbing the peace of the Punjab, Wazir Khan was sent to uproot the Guru. They besieged Anandpur with vast numbers but had a hot reception there, the Sikhs fighting with great valour, making many sallies and repulsing every storming party. But a four months siege reduced them to great want and famine, the Moghuls offered a safe conduct away from the city, and mother Gūjari urged the Guru to accept it. He knew the offer was a trap, and showed this by sending out sacks of rubbish, elaborately packed to look like treasure, they were promptly looted. Still Gujari was harping on the idea of escaping, and the Sikhs demanded surrender, saying it was mad to resist such odds. When the Moghuls demanded that all inside should embrace Islam, the young Ajit Singh boldly and indignantly defied them. But the food and courage of the Sikhs had given out, the Guru asked them to wait for five days, but they would not wait even so long, then he told them to go and die, since they insisted on it. Eventually, on the besiegers giving assurance on oath that the Guru would not be molested if he left the fort, Guru Govind Singh left Anandpur. But the Moghul and Hill Rajas' forces treacherously fell upon the Sikhs as soon as they came out, though the Guru with forty-five of his followers were able to escape. In the general confusion Mātā

Gujari and two of the Guru's children were separated from the others Still pursued by the enemy, the Guru's party entered the fort at *Chamkaur,* near Ropar.

Here the guru put up a gallant fight on the 22nd, and his heroes went out one by one to die, including his little sons Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh. With three faithful Sikhs the Guru left this mud fortress, while the two other survivors stayed behind to cover his retreat, and died there

Gobind Singh was helped in his retreat to safety by two old Muslim devotees from Macchiwāra (Malwa) in Patiala, who disguised him in the blue clothes of a Pir, here his Sikhs found him with great difficulty and the enemy could not trace him out. He thus escaped to *Jattapur*, and while he was there he heard of his sons' fate The little children Fateh Singh and Zorawar Singh were sheltered with their grandmother, Gujari, in the house of a Brahmin at Sarhind, 50 miles off, then this man not only robbed the party but betrayed their presence to Wazir Khan, who arrested them all He ordered the two children to embrace Islam, but they boldly refused, and then he had them most brutally buried alive under the foundations of a wall, 27th December 1704 Their grandmother died of grief and remorse because her obstinate resistance to the Guru's word had had such terrible results When this news came to the Guru at *Jattapur,* he dug up a shrub with his dagger and said, "So shall the Turks be extirpated!"

He retired to *Dina*, where a faithful Sikh, Shamira, hid him and when his presence was known refused to surrender him Here he gathered together a few soldiers and wrote his *Zafarnāmā*, a terrible denunciation of the Emperor's irreligion and treachery, explaining why he himself had to resist and how he was defeated only by overwhelming odds This letter in Persian he sent to Aurangzeb, and it makes most moving reading even today.

He was now " on the run ", he moved from place to place, often refused even shelter and pursued everywhere by his foes Near to *Kapura* he gave up the disguise of blue which had so well served him, and which was the uniform of Jhujhar Singh's troops

5 *The Closing Years (1705-1708)*

With him now there were only very few companions, one being Bhai Daya Singh, yet he still refused to give up hostilities and submit to the Emperor Some of his Sikhs had even repudiated him as Guru, but now his fortunes began to mend. The forty men who had fled from Anandpur were so reproached by their womenfolk that they had consented to return to their Guru under the leadership of Māi Bhāgo, near Firozpur, Wazir Khan met this tiny company at *Khidrana* and was repulsed Then at *Muktsar* in the desert they stood up against Wazir's army till they died, to the last man; one of them was found by the Guru dying on the field and begged for his forgiveness now they had washed away their treason with their heroic blood The Guru

tore up the list of their names, forgave all the forty and honoured them with the title of the "Forty Saved Ones", remembered in prayer by all Sikhs ever since.

He gathered a few more men and moved about in East Punjab for some time, until at *Damdama* he was sheltered by Bhai Dalla, who twice refused to betray him. At *Damdama* after a short visit to *Bhatinda* and back, he resumed his literary work He asked Dhirmal for the copy of the *Granth Sahib*, which had been so long in his custody, but this man rudely replied, "You are so clever that you may as well have a Granth of your own!" The Guru sat down then, and from memory or by clairvoyance dictated the whole of the *Guru-Granth Sahib* to Bhai Singh, adding his father's verses in the appropriate places His own *Dasama Granth Sahib*, containing his own poems and the translations of the Puranas, etc., by the pandits—though many believe he really wrote the whole himself—was compiled or edited by Mani Singh at Amritsar in 1734

The Guru wrote another protest, the *Fatehnāma*, to the Emperor against being continually harassed in that way, his envoys were allowed to leave court safely.

With very few men, he began to travel southwards, and in October 1706 he traversed *Bikaner* and *Pushkar*, hearing while in Rajputana that Aurangzeb had died in the Deccan in February 1707 At that time Bahadur Shah was away in Afghanistan, and his younger brother Muhammed 'Azim usurped the throne and seized the treasury and army As Bahadur Shah was less well equipped, he sought help where he could hope for

it Hearing of the Guru's victories over the Hill Rajas and Imperial forces, even though at the moment his power had apparently been broken, it was clear that a word from the Guru could bring loyal and brave soldiers into the field at any moment

So Bahadur Shah sent his secretary, Bhai Nand Lal, who had long dwelt with the Guru and had once obtained his blessings for the Prince, and asked Gobind Singh to help him obtain the throne This cause seemed worthy to the Guru, the Prince being a better man than his brother, the usurper, and he sent Bhai Dharam Singh and other Sikhs to give Bahadur Shah all possible help

In course of time Bahadur Shah defeated and killed his brother, ascending the throne of Delhi He then sent Dharam Singh to inform his ally, the Guru, of the victory and to thank him for his aid, asking him to postpone his journey to the South and visit him Graciously the Guru moved northwards and met the new Emperor at *Agra*, being received with all the honour due to an ally who was also a holy man

From August till November 1707 the Guru remained with Bahadur Shah, who was milder and more tolerant than Aurangzeb had been, and who greatly enjoyed the company of the Guru and religious discussions with him The Guru hoped at this time that by using his influence with the Emperor he might initiate an era of peace and understanding [illegible] Muslims and non-Muslims, often stressing t[illegible] the bigotry and hate with which the two [illegible]led each c[illegible]

and pointing out several instances of cruelty shown by the Muslim rulers

Then Bahadur Shah had to march south, and invited the Guru to accompany him; Gobind Singh promised to join him later and actually did so. They travelled through Rajputana together, and on the way several Rajput Rajas came to pay homage to the Guru. After passing through *Jaipur*, *Jodhpur*, *Chitor* and *Poona*, they reached *Nander* on the Godavery, now in Andhra State

On reaching Nander, the Guru parted from the Emperor, having come to the place of the man for whom he had travelled so far In a beautiful spot near the river was the Ashram of a *bairāgi* named Lachhman Dev, who was known to have great occult powers and to be fond of playing practical jokes on the simple sadhus and faqirs who came to see him When the Master visited this Ashram, the *bairāgi* was out, so the Master sat on his couch to wait One of Lachhman Dev's disciples ran to tell his Master of this sacrilege, and he came and vainly tried by magic to overturn the couch He then fell at the Guru's feet and owned himself as *banda*, or slave, of the Guru. After he had been taught the tenets of Sikhism, the former *bairāgi* was baptized as a member of the Khālsā, and at his own wish his name was changed to Banda Singh, by which he is known to history. The Guru settled down at this little town on the Godavery, sending Banda to the Punjab to kill Wazir Khan and the Hill Rajas, punishing the Punjab Muslims who had so opposed him at every stage.

Three young Pathans were deputed by the Nawab of Sarhind to murder the Guru, one of them, it is said to have been Gul Khān, the grandson of that Painda Khan whom Guru Har Gobind had slain in battle—went to the Guru's *darbār* at Nander with his companions On the first day they found too many Sikhs around the Guru and had to return disappointed, but they returned day after day, no suspicion being aroused because the Guru had many Muslim disciples Meanwhile they were studying the situation and decided that evening was the best time for their wicked plan

Most of the Sikhs had already retired for the night and the only Sikh near the Guru had gone to sleep; Gobind Singh himself was sitting on his bed, and lay down to rest a few minutes after the Pathans came as usual Like a tiger one of them seized his chance, sprang to his feet, drew his sword and plunged it into the Guru's belly twice, but then the Guru rose and with one sweep of his sword cut off the head of the Pathan The man's two confederates tried to escape but were cut down by the Sikhs who ran up at their Guru's call

Bahadur Shah was camping near by, and at once sent his royal surgeon to suture the Guru's wound One day, after three or four days on his bed, the Guru tried to pull a Sikh's powerful bow to its full stretch, and thus reopened his wound Knowing that the end of his earthly days was near, the Guru took a little food and retired for the night About 1 30 a m he rose and began to recite the Divine Word Then he called

for his Sikhs and gave them in farewell calm and beautiful instructions, opening the *Granth Sahib*, he laid on its pages the customary coconut and five pice, bowed before it as Guru, entrusted the Khalsa to God (cf GGS 54· 7-9), lay down on the bier and quietly passed away to the eternal Home—the last personal Guru for the Sikhs

Deep were the grief and distress of the Sikhs as they lamented that they had no chance to talk fully to the Master before he departed from their midst, and they were awed at the unexpected event They sat together and decided to cremate the Guru's body before day-break, this was done This happened on the fifth day of the bright half of Karttik, Sambat 1765.

It was Thursday, 7th October 1708, when Guru Nanak thus ended his long incarnation in separate human bodies, which began in 1469, nearly 240 years before His Religion was founded, consolidated, confirmed by the blood of many martyrs, strengthened by the fierce and cruel opposition of its neighbours, organised into a brave and manly " nation ", and sent forth into the modern world to interpret the Guru's words in the changing circumstances of life from generation to generation through all time to come

4. Sikhism through the Generations

1 *The Dream of Revenge*

Banda Singh began well the work on which the Guru sent him to the Punjab. Gathering an army, he

soon spread the terror of the Sikh name over a wide area of the Moghul Empire

This "Banda", whom the last Guru sent to Punjab to avenge the crying wrongs of the Sikhs, was born at Rajauri in Poonch in 1670 The story goes that remorse at killing a pregnant dog led him to renounce the world, and he became an accomplished yogi At Nander he met Guru Gobind Singh, who made him a Sikh but had too little time to make the conversion very deep He gave Banda five orders he should maintain celibacy and the truth, give obedient service to the Khalsa, and avoid starting a new sect and the display of kingly pride. With him the Guru sent a letter to all Punjab Sikhs to help him, and in fact thousands did so, eager to fight and die in the Guru's cause, joined by mercenaries and outlaws, he soon gathered a formidable army He was himself a man of great courage and personal magnetism

After at Banur killing Wazir Khan, the murderer of the Guru's two little children, Banda marched on Sarhind with 40,000 men, Sikh bravery in a battle on 30th May 1710 gave him entry to the guilty town, and for three days it was a fearful scene of looting, forced conversions and massacre Banda Singh Bahadur was now the Hindus' recognised protector, being at all time ready to help them against the Punjab Muslims He punished also the treacherous Hill Rajas, and ravaged the whole province with fire and sword, destroyed towns, put whole populations to death, and swept the land from Lahore to Panipat Delhi was in panic

and would have fallen had he immediately attacked it —the whole Empire might have been at his feet

But in the pride of victory and revenge he forgot the Guru's charges he fell in love with a girl in Amritsar he tried to force Bhai Budha's descendant to invest him with the Guruship, on purely Hindu grounds he refused to eat meat, he tried to Hinduise the little of Sikhism that he knew even daring to change their war-cry to "*Fāteh Dharma, fāteh Darśana*!" He also ignored the opinions of the Khalsa and would not take Mātā Sundari's advice to be satisfied with the revenge already had upon the Muslims and the Hill Rajas, stopping the war Thus he began to lose prestige among the Sikhs, and in time divided them into two parties, his own *Bandā'is* and the *Tatwa Khālsā* party, who stood by the Guru's teachings

Meanwhile came his first defeat, on 10th November 1710 at Eminabad He took refuge in the Lohgarh fort, and when that fell he fled in the disguise of a sannyasi. The Moghuls took revenge for his depredations, they martyred thousands of Sikhs in batches during 1712-1713 When Bahadur died there was confusion in Delhi, and Banda again took to raiding and burning towns in 1714 But, defeated at Kota Mīrzajān, he had to retreat to the incomplete fort at Gurdaspur, which held out bravely in a siege but had to surrender in 1715 Banda was taken fighting in a sally from the fort, out of his 10000 men, 8000 fell there, and the others were martyred in daily batches of a hundred, competing eagerly for the honour of earlier

giving their lives for their Religion The scene, graphically described by British envoys, was perhaps the first glimpse of Sikhism given to the West They record that not even one Sikh bought his bodily safety at the price of his Faith. Banda Singh himself was chained in an iron cage, forced to cut the throat of his own little son, and then torn to pieces with red-hot pincers.

Banda Singh had done his work, though in it we can find little of the real spirit of the Gurus, nor can we help deploring his quarrel with the Khalsa, which led so many of the Sikhs to make a treaty with the Muslims not to fight them, in return for the safety of Hindu temples and the cessation of forced conversions to Islam

2 *The Glories of Martyrdom and Resistance (1716-1750)*

In 1714 Ala Singh, one of the great Sikh warriors of this age, became ruler of the Phulkia *misal*,[1] which belonged to Phul's family, in 1716 Chajjia Singh, a convert of Banda's, turned freebooter and founded the Bhangi *misal* I, and in 1718 Jassa Singh Kalal, who founded the Ahluwalia *misal*, was born in a brewer's family. We shall hear more of these later.

With the fall of Banda began a most savage persecution of the Sikhs All were outlawed, it was death for any Hindu even to wear long hair or a beard, for the head of a Sikh 25 rupees was the reward, and 5 to 10

[1] A sort of democratic military state.

rupees were given for information leading to an arrest. Flying columns up to 10,000 strong scoured the country to hunt them out, many reverted to Hinduism, many fled to the hills and forests, and while they wandered nourished on roots, wild berries and fried grain, their families were tortured to death Hundreds were daily killed, no mercy was shown, and until 1724 the surviving Sikhs lay in hiding, then they began to form bands for guerrilla war and plunder, to punish traitors and persecutors

The two parties, Bandā'is and Tatwa Khālsā, almost came to waging civil war at Amritsar in 1725 But as both honoured Mātā Sundari, she sent Bhai Mani Singh there to reconcile them By lot it was decided that the Khalsa should control the Temple, so the Bandā'is were driven out

In 1726 a flying column was chasing the Sikhs here and there, but in time they grew stronger, it was that year when Ala Singh defeated a Rajput army and took its weapons, and in 1730 the Sikhs captured the whole Imperial treasury on the road to Delhi and fled with it to the hills Next year they raided up to the very gates of Lahore, there they suffered two repulses and gained one success Ala Singh defeated Nawab Asad Ali's forces and was joined by many Sikhs eager to plunder and punish their persecutors In 1733 the Muslims tried to divide them by concessions and bribes, they offered a *jagīr* worth a lakh of rupees, more or less in jest, to Kapur Singh, a fan-puller, so he became a Nawab, founding the Singhpuria *misal*, he converted

many low-caste people, killed many Muslims with his own hand, and died with the repute of sainthood in 1753.

The courage of the Sikhs inspired even the timid Hindus to greater boldness In 1734 Hakikat Rai of Wadāla, a boy of 15, was angry when his classmates ridiculed a goddess and in return abused Fatima, the Prophet's daughter He was arrested and ordered to embrace Islam, but bravely refused The Lahore court sentenced him to death in spite of the pleading of great crowds, and the Nazim confirmed that sentence, offering life and great wealth if he would recant Even his mother tried to persuade him, but he was firm, and died like a hero, beheaded in the centre of the city

That was the year Bhai Mani Singh, who lived quietly at Amritsar, revised the *Granth Sahib*, rearranging its songs according to the Guru-authorship, but the Khalsa rejected this innovation and collected a penalty from the saintly man The Sikhs were now divided into older and younger groups, the latter again into five sections, all settled near Amritsar and entrusted with the defence of the Religion In 1735 the Muslim Governor cancelled Kapur Singh's *jagir*, and he took to the usual guerrilla warfare, the Khalsa resumed its raids but was driven across the Sutlej In 1736 they suffered a defeat at Basarki, but two other bands won another fight, and desultory war went on The Rajputs were now freed from the Moghul rule, and the Mahrattas under Bāji Rao menaced Delhi in 1737, the Empire was breaking up under a series of weak rulers on

account of its exotic character and the quarrels among its officials

In 1738 Bhai Mani Singh asked for leave to hold the Diwālī Fair, agreeing to pay Rs 5000 afterwards Thousands of Sikhs responded to his call and came, but when the Lahore ruler sent large bodies of troops there they feared treachery and withdrew, so there was no Fair Mani Singh was nevertheless ordered to pay the money or embrace Islam, he refused to give up the Sikh faith, and his friends brought the money too late, he was cut in pieces Soon after this the Lahore authorities desecrated the Amristar Temple with parties of dancing girls, this was in 1740

There was another great martyrdom in 1745, Shahbaz Singh, a Sikh boy, refused to accept Islam at his Muslim teachers' order They tried to make his father use pressure on him, but he too refused to help in the evil work, both father and son were broken on the wheel and died bravely for their religion

The Sikhs had one great raiding centre at Derah Bābā Nānak on the Ravi, whence they attacked Nādir Shah's army laden with Delhi spoils Two thousand of them from Eminābād began to raise funds from the villages and looted Divan Jaswat Rai's sheep, killing the Diwan himself Lakhpat Rai sought revenge and defeated them near Jammu, slaying all his prisoners near the Delhi Gate in Lahore Another terrible persecution followed Muinuddin (Mir Mannu), Governor of the Punjab, destroyed the Sikh fort at Ramrauni, martyred hundreds of Sikhs daily at Shahidganj in

Lahore as they were betrayed to him by the Hill Rajas, and forcibly shaved hundreds more, so that surviving Sikhs fled to the Basohli Hills and the deserts of Malwa There was a time of confusion, when Mannu, Lakhpat Rai and the Afghan Durrani were up and down in turns, but all were enemies of the Sikhs and did what they could to destroy them The Sikhs hit back hard, too, when Durrani fled back to Kabul from his defeat at Sarhind, Jassa Singh Kalal fiercely harassed his rear and built a fort near Amritsar with the loot, so also Ala Singh built the new fort at Bhawanipur Once the Sikhs raided Lahore itself and burnt the outer city, but this success was followed by a more brutal persecution than ever, so that all the Sikhs there were slain or driven into exile

Thus during these thirty-four years we see the Sikhs on the one side enduring terrific persecution, and on the other side fiercely hitting back at their foes Their growing power is ascribed by Narang to the Iranian invasion by Nādir Shah, the weakness of Delhi Emperors and the rulers of Lahore, many of whom incited the Sikhs against each other, the rise of the Mahratta power, and the inspiration given to the whole community by the courage of its martyrs

3 *The Sikhs Take Power (1751-1799)*

Muinuddin (748-1752) defeated the Multan Governor and practically independent, he defied A ni, but was defeated in

months fighting near Lahore; yet the Afghans left him in power there even after they took the city, and on his death his wife succeeded him in office Adeena Beg had routed the Sikhs at Makhowal, but they soon resumed their depredations, in 1752 Ala Singh captured Patiala and made it his capital, building there a strong fort Next year died Kapur Singh, the "Nawab" who had formed the Khalsa Dal, first regular Sikh army since Banda's days, and shown the way for other Sikh leaders to follow and carve out kingdoms for themselves His successor, Khushal Singh, added much territory and converted many to Sikhism

The next Afghan invasion in 1755 stormed Lahore, Delhi, Agra and Mathura, but the Sikhs harried Ahmed Shah's army as it retired homewards, the Durrani leaving his son Taimur in charge of the Punjab Taimur promptly destroyed the Ramgarh fort at Amritsar, and in 1757 the great Temple of Amritsar itself, filling the holy Tank with its ruins Adeena Beg and his friend Jassa Singh of Ramgarh conquered Jullandhar from the Afghans, defeated Taimur and then retired. Joined by thousands of eager Sikhs, Jassa Singh Kalal of the Ahluwalia *misal* marched on Lahore and collected the taxes of its suburbs for himself That same year Ala Singh defeated a Moghul army, the Sikh flag was on the way to victory and empire

Next year, 1758, the Sikhs entered Lahore, Jassa Singh became King there and issued Sikh coinage for the first time. Adeena Beg called some Mahrattas in to drive the Sikhs from Lahore, but the Sikhs were

able to plunder Sarhind before Raghoba's Mahrattas arrived, these took Lahore, Multan and Attock almost without resistance The Sikhs were now raiding in all directions, with the forced help of Muslims they repaired the shrines of Amritsar For a short while Adeena Beg troubled them, but on his death they immediately rose again, and in 1759 the Mahrattas fled before the returning Afghans of Ahmed Shah

Meeting at Amritsar in 1760, the Sikh armies again attacked Lahore, burning its walls, looting the city, and taking a tribute of Rs 30,000 from its people, they also overran the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Ambala and Ferozpur When Ahmed Shah totally broke the Mahratta power at Panipat in 1761, the Sikhs built forts at Lahore, Gujranwala and all over the Punjab as soon as Ahmed Shah withdrew as usual every year In 1762 they obtained their first cannon.

There followed a confused period of about six years —Sikhs, Afghans and Punjab Muslims alternating in power, with a kaleidoscopic series of changes in the boundaries of the Sikh *misals* or states In 1762 the Sikhs held their first *gurmatā*, or religious council, at the rebuilt Amritsar, after the Ludhiana slaughter in 1763, the Afghans again swept down upon Amritsar, blowing up the Temple and desecrating the Tank and shrines, slaying many Sikhs there and washing the walls with their blood But the Sikhs rose again as soon as they passed on, sacked Kasur and Malerkotla, totally destroyed Sarhind again, and brought under their control all between the Jamna and the Sutlej, together with

Saharanpur They now began to feel themselves to be one nation and entitled to rule in the Punjab The defeat at Kalanaur in 1764 was at once wiped out by the recapture of Lahore, city and fort, at night, and they once again restored the Temple at Amritsar In 1765 the Sikh Religion was declared to be paramount in all the Punjab, coins being struck in Lahore by Rajas Lehnā Singh and Gūjar Singh of the Bhangi *misal* II; that same year Ala Singh died During the usual Pathan invasion in 1767 the Sikhs had to withdraw once again from Lahore, but they at once returned, and in 1768 stormed Rohtas and advanced their boundaries to the River Indus The Punjab was now a confederacy of twelve Sikh states (*misals*) or military kingdoms

These *misals* were ruled by Chiefs with the good will of their followers who formally elected them National affairs were settled by *gurmatās* at Amritsar, meeting before the two *Granth Sahibs* after prayer, each group sitting behind its leader and speaking through him, resolutions were always discussed until unanimity was reached, usually on the views of the most respected leaders. Such meetings could take place only when all the Sikhs present were " one in the Guru ", willing to agree in the interest of the common Sikh causes The soldiers were like feudal retainers and could change their masters at will, they used sword, spear and musket; they wore turban, short knickers and tight slippers, while their chiefs had chain-armour, steel helmet, breast-plate, etc Their flag was of saffron colour and their war-cry " *Sat Sri Akāl* ! " They fought by skirmishing,

breaking off for their meal of *chapatti* or parched grain, they followed so far as possible the Gurus' chivalrous rule of giving water indiscriminately to all the wounded and burying or burning the dead according to their own rites Booty was equally divided, and the chiefs imposed light taxes upon all trade They treated the peasants fairly, dividing produce with the cultivators on a 50-50 basis, a *panchayat* in each village settled all civil disputes, while criminal cases were judged by the chief, who took his own reward from each side Fines were the usual penalty, being graded by the wealth of the convicted and largely replacing capital punishment, though mutilations were not unknown. There was no poor law, guests were a common charge on the whole village, and the indigent were given food and clothes from the funds of the local temples

In 1772 Hira Singh of the Nakai *misal* took Pākapattan, while Jhanda Singh of Bhangi *misal* I at last stormed Multan with the help of traitors, and in the following year Jai Singh of Kanhia *misal* took the Kangra Valley The Sikh kingdoms were extending their area, but at this time began another period of internal war, the states competing with each other for pre-eminence In such times it is natural there was little attention paid to Sikh theology, and most of the converts thought of little beyond baptism and taking up the sword to war upon the enemy and thus gather wealth Education also sank to a low level and many of the Sikhs were really hardly in any way different from the Hindu masses around them, following the same

degraded practices and holding the same superstitious ideas In 1778 Jassa Singh Kalal annexed Kapurthala and took the title of King, he was a very brave and generous man, once rescuing many girls abducted by the Afghans and sending escorts with them till they were all safely home He was the first to issue his own coins, and it is from him the recently ruling house of Kapurthala is derived

In 1780 at Gujranwala was born one destined to be the first Sikh Emperor, Ranjit Singh of the Sukarchakria *misal*, at his birth the Hindu rites were celebrated along with the Sikh, for his family was very imperfectly converted to Sikhism There was a quarrel in that same year over the booty of Jammu, and in 1785 Jai Singh of Kanhia *misal* conquered that province for himself.

By this time, so we are told, the Sikhs had altogether a total of from two to three lakhs of cavalry, had they united, they could easily have swept all North India, but they were still too parochial for that, and struggled among themselves instead So when Ranjit Singh, the "Constantine of Sikhism", who came to his throne in 1792, really turned his attention to his neighbours, their thrones came toppling to the ground at his feet Jai Singh of Kanhia was succeeded in 1789 by his daughter-in-law Sada Kaur, who ruled the state wisely until 1820, in 1790 Giān Singh of Nakai *misal* prudently married his sister to Ranjit Singh and so became a friend of the rising star. Other states continued their fratricidal struggles to the end

4 *The Sikh Empire* (*1799-1849*)

The beginning of that end came in 1799 when Ranjit Singh captured Lahore, expelling Chet Singh of Bhangi *misal* II, and was recognised by the Afghans as King Up to 1800 we learn that all the Sikh states together had only forty cannon, they still fought mostly on horseback, and when George Thomas, the Irish adventurer, was at the court of Sāhib Singh of Patiala, he reckoned they had altogether about 60,000 cavalry, lightly armed and quite without military discipline In 1802 Ranjit Singh took Amritsar, and Gurdit Singh fled from there to Tarantāran Jassa Singh of Ramgarhia *misal* died in peace in 1803, and five years later his successor Jodh Singh quietly became a vassal of Ranjit Singh After the battle of Ludhiana in 1806, Sahib Singh of Patiala came under his control, and on the death of Kharak Singh in 1807 Nakai *misal* was also absorbed and Faridkot taken Next year Nishanwalia was added, and at this time practically the whole of the Punjab, with areas also beyond its boundaries, formed a single state under Ranjit Singh's imperial rule It was his idea, in fact, to replace the Moghul Empire with an Empire under Sikh control, and so to complete the liberation begun by the Gurus

It was the crossing of the Sutlej to Ludhiana in 1806 which led to his first rebuff The Sikhs of Jind soon regretted calling him in and appealed to the British, who in 1809 forced a treaty on Ranjit Singh declaring the Sutlej to be his frontier and letting him keep only

police forces to the south of it That was the year when Ranjit Singh employed French officers lent by Napoleon to complete his fort of Gobindgarh at Amritsar and to introduce military discipline in his army, though not with very great success It was the important year also when he abolished the practice of holding political *gurmatās*; he began to consult also non-Sikhs about his political measures Teja Singh has pointed out that this was in order to make all his subjects feel they had a place in his kingdom, and that they all, Sikhs, Hindus, and even Muslims, formed one nation of the Punjab and owed a common loyalty to a common throne

The year 1812 is noted for the issue of J Malcolm's book *Sketch of the Sikhs*, wherein he tried to be fair and pointed out the weakness of disunion which underlay the outer show of Ranjit Singh's power In 1818 his general stormed Multan after a siege, taking it from Muzaffar Khan of the Afghan kingdom, who fell there with his five sons In 1819 Misr Chand defeated the Pathan Governor of Kashmir, Jabbar Khan, and Ranjit Singh annexed Kashmir to his empire By 1823 he also exercised rule over Bannu, Peshawar and beyond Srinagar, though his actual sway often did not extend far beyond the forts That year, 1823, was also important for the issue of Bhai Santokh Singh's *Nanak Prakāsh* dealing with the life of the Founder in Gurmukhi verse

In 1829 Sawanmal was made the Governor of Multan, and the empire enjoyed some years of comparative peace, though we are told the Muslims did not enjoy much

prosperity under its rule In 1834 Ranjit Singh had a paralytic stroke, due in part to his excessive drinking of alcohol, in 1835 Ferozpur lapsed to the British, and in January 1837 Hari Singh Nalwa was killed in the most gallant defence of the Jamrud fort against the Afghan army of Dost Muhammed. The Maharaja gave an interview in December 1838 to the British officers, to permit of their advance upon Kabul through his territory and in the next year, 1839, Ranjit Singh died at the age of 59.

Certainly he was a great man, of great ideas, but he lived in an age when the growing power of the British made those ideas impracticable He made Sikhism kingly, giving costly jewels, gold, estates and precious canopies to endow and adorn the temples, yet we are told he was always even in his proudest days proud to serve the poorest Sikh in the *sangat*, or the religious meeting But, like Constantine, he was poorly instructed in the religion he professed; at his death Hindu ceremonies were performed along with the Sikh rites, and he even caused that his queens and concubines be burned along with his dead body in the cruel rite of *sati*

His empire did not stand after him Kharak Singh, who followed him, was a man of poor understanding, and he died in the next year, 1840, his son Nāunihal Singh was returning from his father's funeral when a gateway fell on him and killed him (November 1840) After that Sher Singh took the throne and ruled until he was murdered in September 1843 by the Sindhanwalia

Sirdars, being succeeded by the infant son of Ranjit Singh, Dulip Singh, in whose reign the real power lay with Raja Gulāp Singh of Jammu

That rather tragic year was marked, more happily, by the issue of Bhai Santokh Singh's second and greater book, the *Gurpratap Surya*, usually known as *Suraj Prakāsh*. This is a sort of epic, giving the lives and teachings of all the Ten Gurus, in beautiful Gurmukhi verse which is said to excel the beauty even of the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata It is quoted by orthodox Sikhs as having almost canonical authority and is the source for much of our knowledge It probably bases largely on oral tradition among the *giānis*.

In 1844 Sawanmal was shot, and his son Mulrāj succeeded him as the Governor of Multan The Rani was always inciting the Sikhs into war with the British, having no idea of their resources, and in December 1844 the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej in force at the Hariki Ford The British at once declared war and annexed all to the south of the Sutlej, the first battle at *Mudki* on 18th December was defensive, but four days later the Sikhs were driven from their trenches at *Phirushahar* after a severe battle In the middle of January 1846 the Sikhs won a slight success at *Badowal*, but on 26th January they were severely defeated at *Aliwal* by Sir Harry Smith, who had only half their strength Ranjodh Singh was outgeneralled, and bravely as they fought the Sikhs had poorer discipline and could not stand before the English fire. They were driven over the river, lost 10,000 dead and all their guns On

10th February they were again routed at *Sobrāon*, there was a terrible slaughter on the collapsed bridge, few escaping and none surrendering The war ended, the British annexed the Jullandhar Doab, and gave Kashmir to Raja Gulāb Singh when he paid a war indemnity of 7½ lakhs, he had to resist both a Hindu and a Muslim claimant to the province before it fell to his dynasty, which is still there (1960) For the rest of the Punjab a Council of Regency was set up, advised by the Resident in Lahore, Sir Henry Lawrence

Trouble began again on 20th April 1848, when some European officers were murdered in Multān, and the Sikh soldiers and people rose under Mulrāj to throw the foreigners out After skirmishes at *Rāmnagar* (22nd November) and *Sadulpur* (3rd December), *Multān* was stormed by the British on 2nd January, 1849 On 13th January Gough fought a drawn battle at *Chilliān-wāla* on the Jhelum, where the Sikhs had the advantage and won back some of their lost guns But Napier took command and, reinforced by troops from Multan, on 21st February totally routed the Sikhs at *Gujrāt* on the Chenab, after no more than one hour's severe conflict They were chased to Rawalpindi, where the whole army of Sikhs surrendered Then Dalhousie deposed Raja Dulip Singh, who was still only nine years old, and annexed the Punjab The short-lived Sikh Empire came to an end with little glory beyond the praise given by an English enemy that they were "the bravest and steadiest enemy ever encountered in India by a British army".

5. *Under the British (1849-1947)*

The Lawrence brothers, and later Sir John alone, took over the rule of the Punjab, they reduced land taxes, introduced the usual "neutrality" towards religions other than Christian mission work, built a chain of forts along the frontier, disarmed the people, improved communications, opened many village schools and courts, and succeeded in winning the general satisfaction of the people, whose condition certainly improved greatly above what they had known in the days of incessant war, rapine and massacre

This wise policy bore fruit in 1857 when almost the whole of North India was up in revolt against the British, supporting what began as a mutiny of the Indian soldiers Though there was a certain amount of unrest even in the Punjab, so that small risings took place at Peshawar, Multan and other places, Nicholson's flying column was easily able to disarm the men there, to secure the arsenals at Ferozpur and Phillaur, and to pacify the country, so that his forces could soon be moved to Delhi and help to take the city on 20th September 1858 This was made possible largely by the attitude of loyal support to the British yielded with open heart by the vast mass of Sikhs in the Punjab—a loyalty for which they were noted to the last days of British rule in India

In 1849, soon after the annexation of the Province, J D Cunningham brought out his *History of the Sikhs*, a praiseworthy attempt to display the truth about those

who had so lately been the fierce enemies of the writer's own people The country was at the time in a strange position Under Ranjit Singh, whose idea was purely autocratic, democratic functions had little place, and the Sikhs gradually lost their instinct for them This, as Teja Singh says, really hurt the community more than the persecution of earlier days, political *gurmatās* had been abolished early in his reign, and the religious *gurmatās* began to degenerate because those who issued them were mostly illiterate fanatics Many of the temples were still in the charge of *Sahijdhāris,* Sikhs who had not accepted baptism or the outward emblems of the cult lest they bring a martyrdom for which they were unprepared, these men gradually lost what little they had known of Sikh doctrine and in effect lapsed into Hinduism The Maharaja regularly consulted Hindu astrologers in fixing auspicious times, and in many other ways conformed to Hindu practice, Sikhism was becoming even among the Khalsa members largely a matter of fashion in turban and beard Under Ranjit Singh no central association like the *Sarbat Khālsā* was possible, as the numbers of Sikhs increased their zeal was being diluted When they lost even what political power they had held, and their lands came under foreign rule, they were for the time so depressed that they all but abandoned interest in their religion altogether

Now from the time of the Tenth Guru, as Teja Singh says, "there was no room left for any wavering on the borderline All who would want to serve humanity

through Sikhism must join it seriously as regular members and receive its baptism as the initial step" (pp 30-31). "Changes for the worse have always synchronised with the lack of insistence on the baptismal vows This was in the days of the Sikh rule, when luxury and power tempted our people to consider the vows too hard for them They lost their identity as Sikhs and became as superstitious about God and His worship as they had been before the time of the Gurus. With the modern revival the Sikhs have found themselves again" (pp 38-39).

At first both Hindus and Muslims were being converted almost equally, but as Moghul resistance and tyranny increased it became more and more difficult for the Sikhs to recruit any save Hindus; their constant fight for existence prevented them from giving proper teaching to these converts, who gradually corrupted the whole with their old Hindu ideas. But under Ranjit Singh many Muslims were converted, partly for social and economic reasons, and many Khalsa Sikhs did hold to their own Sikh customs and beliefs The British so admired the courage of their Sikh enemies that they showed definite sympathy with them after the conquest. devoted Sikhs found that in the British army they could maintain the Khalsa vows intact, so many Sikhs enlisted. and their regimental *panchayats* kept up the tradition among them In this way the swing towards absorption into Hinduism was checked

Under the inspiration of Raja Narendra Singh of Patiala (died 1862), Baba Ram Singh started the

Nāmadhari Movement, largely as a protest against the luxurious materialism of the Ranjit era They stressed great simplicity, with an inner life of hymns and meditation, and discouraged lectures and philosophy—thus checking the drift towards Vedānta

At about the same time was founded the *Nirmalā-khārā*, with its motto "*Ride giān, mukh bhagati, vartan vanāg*", (wisdom in the heart, devotional love in the mouth, unattached behaviour) These Nirmalas traced back their spiritual ancestry to the first five whom Guru Gobind Singh sent to Banaras Ram Singh, Karam Singh, Ganda Singh, Vir Singh and Sobha Singh They had their own central office and several branches in different parts.

It was in 1872 that the Sikh Revival may be said to have begun The spread of English education and knowledge of Western ideas of scholarship and democracy led the Sikhs to start many small *divāns*, where they could meet together for discussion as Sikhs, they came to realise that Sikhism would perish altogether if it were allowed to merge into the Hinduism all around it, and though they could not yet form one authoritative body which would govern all the affairs of the Community, they did start in Amritsar in this year the *Singh Sabhā*, which proved the source of many things

In 1875, Swāmī Dayānand Saraswati founded the Ārya Samāj, and two years later toured Punjab with his lectures, founding several branches there Giānī Dit Singh stood up as the champion of Sikhism against this Hindu lst, in debates and lectures and

by his book *Dambha Nivāran*, he urged that Hindu elements be cast out of Sikhism and the pure doctrine of the Gurus be taught everywhere

That year, 1877, also saw the first attempt of a European scholar to give the world the teachings of the Gurus Dr Trumpp, a German missionary, had studied the *Granth Sahib* under Atmā Singh, a Nirmala *sadhu* of Amritsar, for the last seven years, and now produced a translation of about one-third of the book But his work has been universally disapproved because of his hostile bias, he took every opportunity to misrepresent and to belittle the Guru and the Sikh Religion. However, this proved an encouragement to those who dreamed of raising Sikhism to be a world-wide religion, in 1879 the Singh Sabhā was reorganized on stronger lines in Lahore Also about this time Raja Bikram Singh of Farīdkot got scholars to print the whole Guru-Granth Sahib with voluminous commentaries according to the orthodox tradition of the giānis, this made it far more possible for scholars to study the Book all over the world

Meanwhile the British rulers were planning great things to increase the wealth and prosperity of the Punjab, wherein the Sikhs had a full share of the benefits and so acquired the means of establishing schools and colleges of their own In 1882 the British opened the Great Sarhind Canal, drawing the waters of the Sutlej at Rupar through Ludhiana and the Phulkia States to irrigate the southern half of Ferozpur District

In 1887 Tara Singh, who was inspired by his patron Raja Narindra Singh, published his important book on Sikh doctrines, the *Gurmat Nirnāi Sāgar*, the first effort in Punjabi to produce a solid work on Sikh theology. In 1889 the Singh Sabha was renamed the *Khālsā Divān*, this later gave off a branch the *Chief Khālsā Divān of Amritsar*, which has done very much to educate Sikhs on Western lines, to awaken in them pride and keenness for their own religion, and to break them off from Hinduism Another great forward move was taken by the Sikhs in 1894, when Dr Charan Singh of Amritsar, Sādhu Singh, and other scholars joined to form the *Khālsā Tract Society*, long ruled by the saintly Dr. Bhai Vir Singh, this Society has flooded the Punjab with cheap reprints of parts of the Guru-Granth Sahib, many of them with translations and commentaries, together with other historical and literary treasures of the early days of their Religion Each is on sale for a few annas, many being issued in serial form Books also have been published, such as Rūp Singh's *Sikhi Mārga*, in 1916 The *Sikh Tract Society*, formed by a few graduate Sikh scholars, tries to do the same in English, it has published many pamphlets by Dr. Teja Singh and by Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar on historical and exegetical topics Their work is being done with missionary zeal, as Giāni Sher Singh rightly says

But Swāmi Rāma Tīrtha (born near Gujranwala in 1873) became a *sannyasi* in 1899 and almost at once filled Punjab with his ecstatic poems, recalling many

Sikh hymns from the Granth Sahib, this influence for spiritual life, which would naturally draw people towards Hindu Vedānta, continued till the Swāmi's accidental death by drowning in 1906.

In 1900, the British opened the Lower Chenab Canal, irrigating more than 25 lakhs of acres of dry land and greatly increasing the wealth of West Punjab Next year the Frontier Province was separated from the Punjab, bringing many Sikhs there under a different Government. During these years Kahan Singh's books were coming out, increasing the gulf between the Sikhs and Hindus and insisting on the total independence of Sikhism from all other religions whatsoever

The year 1909 is one which Sikhs and Europeans alike will have cause to bless An officer of Government had resigned his work some years earlier to give his whole time to a sympathetic study of Sikhism and Sikh History, Mr M A Macauliffe, taught by orthodox giānis, published in 1909 his six great volumes, which will always be remembered as the real foundation for all later study of Sikhism in Western languages Though he did not translate the Book entire, he gave a fair and favourable view of its contents under the heads of the various authors, in many cases showing how the hymns arose in different circumstances of their life The book received a sort of *imprimatur* as substantially correct from some of the leading giānis of the day, though his pessimistic view of the future of Sikhism has now little likelihood of coming true, knowledge of the religion is

no longer dying out. Indeed, even today some such giānis still wander about the countryside with their disciples, teaching people as they go.

More or less on Nirmala lines, Khazan Singh in 1914 published his two volumes on the History and Philosophy of the Sikhs. But many of the Singh Sabha members devoted themselves to the special work of Gurdwārā reform, aiming that those in charge of the "temples" be men able to teach the religion and also to live it, even up to this time most of the Gurdwaras were still in the control of Udāsīs and Sahijdhārī Sikhs. These reformists started a great agitation through the Press and on many platforms that all such Hinduised guardians of temples be removed and that orthodox Khalsa Sikhs be put in charge, that the Punjabi language be taught everywhere to enable a wider knowledge of the Guru's words, and that the Sikhs organise themselves as a nation. They formed themselves into what was called the *Akāli* Movement, which soon put Nirmala books and all semi-Hindu customs and doctrines out of vogue.

During those four years of the World War, 1914-1918, the Sikhs won further admiration all over the world through their heroism in battle, their loyalty and discipline, their faithfulness to their own customs, indeed they and the Gurkhas almost seemed to aim at a monopoly of Victoria Crosses at one time. It was with pleasure to the British, then, that in 1917 the Triple Canal Project was opened; this carries the surplus water of the Jhelum to the lower Bari Doab, irrigates

more than 20 lakhs of acres, and has reclaimed a huge extent of waste land

After the War came the Non-Co-operation Movement, with the horrible shooting atrocity at Amritsar in 1919, the Sikhs played a heroic part in the national upheaval then led by Gandhiji In the same years they were waging a great fight also of their own, they tried, at times by force, to get possession of the temples and to drive out the unworthy mahants who held them In 1921 Lachhman Singh, Dalip Singh and 130 other Sikhs were killed at Nankana Sahib (Talwandi) by a Mahant Narain Das, and in 1922 many Akalis were brutally beaten in the Guru-ka-Bagh The Akāl Takht passed a *gurmatā* that there should be no meeting with Government until all Sikh prisoners were released. so the Sikhs could not discuss the proposed Gurdwaras Bill openly and were forced to negotiate indirectly and in secret This is why Teja Singh holds that *gurmatās* must be only religious, not social or political, in a country where non-Sikhs also live, *e g*, the adoption of the Punjabi language for East Punjab is not a purely Sikh affair At last in 1925 the Gurdwaras Bill became law, the Akalis gained most of the shrines, and obtained a central body for communal government, peace was restored

In 1926, about ten miles east of Pākapattan, were opened the head-works of the important Sutlej Valley Project, and next year the Bikaner Gang Canal irrigated 1100 square miles from Ferozpur to Shivpur. Punjab had never known such irrigation and was swiftly

ıncreasıng in prosperıty and ın populatıon, by 1930 there were 19,555 mıles of canals ın the Provınce

The Khalsa Tract Socıety ıssued ın 1927 the ımportant *Srı Guru Granth Kośa*, whıch for the first tıme enabled outsıders to make effectıve study of the scrıptures, not less ımportant was Dr Sahıb Sıngh's *Gurbānī Vıākaran*, some years later *Gurmat Nırnaı* came from Bhaı Jodh Sıngh ın 1932, showıng the general teachıngs of the Guru by arrangıng hymns under certaın heads. Sınce that tıme we have had a constant flow of books ın Punjabı, Hındı, Urdu, Englısh, many scholars enrıchıng the lıterature wıth theır studıes ın varıous parts of the *Guru-Granth*, Dr. Sher Sıngh's *Phılosophy of Sıkhısm* ın 1944 also marked an era

In the second great natıonal struggle of the century launched by Gandhıjı ın 1930 the Sıkhs agaın played some part, perhaps one who captured the ımagınatıon and ınspıred the masses of the whole of Indıa was young S Bhagat Sıngh, leader of the Revolutıonarıes, who was hanged wıth two Hındu comrades at Lahore ın 1931 under dısgraceful cırcumstances So too, whıle thousands of Sıkhs fought ın Afrıca and elsewhere along wıth other soldıers of the Commonwealth, wınning fresh laurels of glory by theır heroısm durıng the war of 1939-1945, others, such as Gen Mohan Sıngh and many Sıkh soldıers, stood by Babu Subhaschandra Bose ın hıs Independence Government abroad and fought for freedom round Imphal ın the Manıpur Hılls. After the first two days of savage massacre ın Calcutta, launched by fanatıcs on 16th August 1946 ın the vaın

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hope of driving all non-Hindus from the city, the Sikhs stood side by side with the Hindus in repelling these assailants, who had the open sympathy and help of the then Bengal Government Yet they rescued 5000 Muslims and 20000 Hindus from dangerous pockets and fed them side by side in their local Gurudwara Jagat-Sudhar So too, when on partition of the Punjab a mass slaughter of non-Muslims began in the western half of the Province, the Sikhs were the first to rally in defence of their own women folk and of Hindus, and indeed took a bloody revenge which would have satisfied the soul of Banda Singh Bahadur himself, could he have seen it Happily, peace then supervened.

In 1953 the Sikhs in Calcutta formed the Sikh Cultural Centre which through its English monthly, *The Sikh Review*, and in other ways is doing much for the spread and maintenance of the Religion in many lands

And now what is their future? Their holy land is cut asunder, half of its shrines lost to the community in hostile territory where Sikhs hardly dare go as pilgrims; Talwandi, Lahore, Punja Sahib are among the holy places lost to them Most have lost their valuable lands and had to flee as refugees to Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta—wherever they can find a living The most heartening thing we can say about them is that nowhere have they shown the least inclination to despair or beggary, they have energetically started tiny and growing businesses where their resources were small, they have opened big affairs where they had greater funds, the streets of Delhi were filled with their stalls,

where everything could be bought The Army, Navy and Air Force of India are full of them, almost every driver in Calcutta is a Sikh, hardly can we go anywhere in India today without the eye falling on a member of the Khalsa As one Sikh friend said to me in 1950, perhaps unconsciously remembering Guru Nanak's remark about the friendly village (p xlii), "God has scattered them over India, so that they may carry the manly spirit of the Guru everywhere and plant it in every Indian heart"

He may be rich or poor, clever or of little mental brilliance, the true member of the Khalsa can always face life with confidence and courage, for he feels himself equal to a lakh and a quarter (*savā lākh*) so long as he is united to the Guru as a faithful son of Guru Gobind Singh

5. Sri Adi Guru Granth Sahib

1. Reverence to the Granth as to the Guru

The *Guru Granth* is the Guru's own book, through which the Guru speaks to his disciples from age to age Thus it is also called "Gurbānī" the "Guru's voice", he who attentively reads, sings, or listens to its hymns is brought into direct personal contact with the Guru, who is in a very real sense "incarnate" in those hymns Immediately on its completion Guru Arjan bade the Sikhs regard it with reverence as they regarded the Guru's own person, and on his passing from their visible

midst the Tenth Guru declared he could be found in its hymns if diligently sought

Thus it must always be natural and proper for the Sikhs to show outer reverence to the Holy Book, wherein they find by their own experience the living Guru in their midst A like reverence is shown by the Jew who stands when the scrolls of God's Law are brought in and bows when they are opened by the reader, and by the Christian who stands to hear the Gospel read An even greater reverence is shown by the Vaishnavas when the *Jnāneśwari* and the *Bhāgavatam* are taken in procession, and even the Muslim takes care that the Holy *Qur'ān* is kept covered from the dust and no other book is allowed to lie upon it As Dr Sher Singh says (p 90) "The Granth contains the word of the Guru, and its worship by the faithful Sikh should not have much of an unhealthy influence of an idol He always expects some good counsel from the book", just as the disciple finds even in his Guru's lightest words the most profound and inspiring teachings

It is a habit, therefore, with many—a habit shared by men all over the world with their own scriptures—to open the book haphazard and to take the first verse seen by the eye as the Guru's counsel at that time It may be "superstitious", or it may not be, but experience shows how very helpful such consultation often is in pointing out the better way Before the *Guru-Granth Sahib* is read, a short prayer is offered, and the reading usually commences from the beginning of the stanza at the top left corner of any page where

the book opens So also names are chosen for new Sikhs by taking one beginning with the initial of the first word on the page whereat the Book first opens

The *Granth Sahib* is to be regarded, and therefore treated, as the very body of the Guru himself Thus it is always kept in a clean silken cloth on a raised "throne", is opened under a canopy, and a fly-whisk is constantly waved over it while it is being read Those who enter the special room, or the Gurdwara, where it is kept, should have just bathed, put on clean clothes, and covered their heads, before taking their seat in its presence they bow to it as to the Guru But no lights or incense are to be waved before it, no flowers offered as to an idol, nor are bells to be rung in worship, *worship*, in the true sense, is due to God alone in His own proper person, and no Sikh can be a bibliolater

Yet it may be true here and there that, as Dr Sher Singh says (p 90) "The Granth is taking the place of an idol among the illiterate Sikhs A Sikh finds a great artistic satisfaction in beautifully clothing the Granth, making a luxurious bed for it in a well decorated room, offering flowers to it and washing the floor of the room in which it is kept But a faithful mind goes farther and expects that in doing so he is performing a deed which is inherently good and which will help him in attaining the salvation in the Vaishnava sense" Of course, such practices, understandable as they be, constitute a part of that relapse into Hinduism against which the whole modern trend of Sikhism, like the original mission of the Gurus, is an open protest

I have called it "understandable", for where there is love in the heart it must crave to express itself in outer actions; where love becomes intense, emotional, those outer expressions may easily run to excess The true Sikh sees in his Granth not merely a *book* written by his Guru, but he was taught by that very Guru to see himself, in it and in its words to find the life-giving teaching of the Guru's utterance The Book is full of the beloved Name of the Guru, almost every stanza ends with a verse containing it, it is not strange then that Puran Singh writes (p. 132) "There is a fragrance of roses as we name Nanak While writing about him I have felt the shower of rose petals on these pages and the perfume of the Golden Temple all about me. When I was sitting in my room, miles away from the country of roses, and when the season of flowers was passed, their fragrance was still there Name 'Nanak' and the Mystic Rose returns" He also says "Many of my Sikh sisters . . have told me that they have found more than all the world could give them in Nanak's songs" A Book containing such a treasure, how can the disciple fail in his love and reverence for it?

It is customary for pious Sikhs to sing or read the *Japji*, the *Jāpu Sahib*, and Guru Gobind Singh's *Ten Sawwaiyas* first thing in the morning, though many prefer to start the day with the *Sukhmani*. In the evening the *Rahiras* is taken, with a *Chaupai* of the Tenth Guru, and part of the *Anand*, at night, before sleep, the *Kirtana Sohila* Round the dying, friends and

relations read the *Sukhmani*, and during cremation the *Sohila*, reminding all that what we call death is but the night and that day follows on its darkest hours The *Anand* is recited at deaths, marriages and all such ceremonies

2. The Nature of the Guru Granth

The *Granth Sahib* is a collection of devotional hymns and prayers In it there is little of explicit philosophy or ethics, both can be deduced from countless scattered references It would hardly exaggerate to say that the Guru assumes these in his Sikhs, though he does not hesitate to insist on them from time to time The *philosophy*, so carefully and skilfully described by Dr Sher Singh, differs little from that of Vaishnavas as outlined in the Introduction to Volume 7 of this Series, save in its total rejection of the incarnations, idols and caste, nor does the Guru teach the mechanical repetition of any word or phrase on the grounds of it being God's Name or full of magical power As Dr Sher Singh says, it may indeed be regarded as a merging of Advaita Bhakti (more or less as found in the *Jnāneśwari*) with Sufism The *ethics* of the Guru differs in no real sense from that of every other true religion, stressing as its fundamental sanctions the law of Karma and the pleasing of God as the better motive, it teaches that no happiness can be found save in that blissful Lord of Love

In literary form and content the hymns closely resemble those of the Hindu devotional saints, many of

whose songs the Compiler included in the Holy Book They recall much in Tukārām's *Abhangas*, in the Hebrew Psalms, in the Manichean Psalms found in Coptic, and in the Protestant hymnaries of Christianity We may note several resemblances to the "Song of Solomon", Jayadeva's *Gīta Govindam*, and to other mystical works There is of course much repetition, but this does not weary the reader because of the fiery sincerity and devotion which blaze out from every line of the hymns

We are told that in the Granth there are 3384 hymns, consisting of 15575 stanzas, two-fifths of which were written by the Fifth Guru and one-fifth by the First, my copy covers 1430 pages and is a volume 10½ by 9 inches size All the Ten Gurus contributed to it save the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Tenth, Guru Gobind Singh wrote the *Dasama Granth*, which we shall glance at presently Guru Arjan also included hymns by a number of Muslim and Hindu saints, whose chronological order is thus given by Sher Singh Jayadeva, Nāmdev, Trilochana, Paramānand, Sadhana, Beni(?), Rāmānanda, Dhannā, Pipa, Sain, Kabir, Ravidās, Farid, Bhikkan and Sūrdās We have passages from almost all of these in our "Gospel" One hymn of Mirābai was first included and then later struck out by the Guru, it remains in Bhai Banno's edition, together with a few other "apocryphal" hymns from the first Guru Nanak These devotee-poets cover the period from about 1150 to four hundred years later Then there are various *Sawwayas* in honour of the first

five Gurus, written by various bards, of whom Sher Singh counts 17 Mathra, Jalap, Bal, Harbans, Talya, Salya, Jalya, Bhal, Kalh Sahar, Kal, Jal, Nal, Kirat, Das, Gayand, Sandrang and Bhikha One Sundar wrote the *Sadd* in Ramkali, and in the same *rāg* the bards Satta and Balwand wrote the *Coronation Ode*, there are also hymns by Mardana Thus forty-two authors in all are represented in this Holy Book of the Sikhs

3. Arrangement of, and Reference to, the Granth

Dr Sher Singh has given us a good reason for these hymns being arranged according to *rāg* instead of by author, date or subject It is in order to stress the essentially aesthetic element in the Guru's "Word"—music for the first time perhaps playing the dominant part in religion, though the Prophet Mānī certainly made it important in his He tells us that the special note of Guru Nanak's religion is Wonder, he calls it a *Vismāda-mārga* (path of wonder), a way to God through admiring delight in His greatness, in the wisdom and beauty of His universe, and in His dealings with men It is more akin to the rapture of the Nature-poets of the West, to the awe and reverential love which sweeps the heart of the astronomer as he gazes through some great telescope into the unfathomed vastness of "space", to the ecstasy of the mystic who finds God in a shining dewdrop and holds the universe in a flower

For convenience in picking out quickly the hymns suited to certain moods, they were grouped in the 31

rāgs, or musical modes—most of which are represented in our own selection. Under each *rāg* they are thus arranged *Chaupadas* (hymns in four-line stanzas), *Ashtapadis* (hymns in eight-line stanzas), *Chhants* (six-line stanza hymns), special short poems, *Vārs* or Odes (consisting of one or more ślokas and one paulai), and before the *Chhants* came special long poems, like *Sukhmani*, at the end of each *rāg* the hymns of non-Sikh devotees are arranged in the same order In addition, the musical clef (*ghar*) in which each hymn is to be sung is often given.

In our own "Gospel", for convenience, all references to the Granth Sahib are given in brackets after the passage, thus. First comes the initial of the author's name, in capitals **N** (Nanak, Mohala I), **A** (Angad, Mohala II, etc), **AD** (Amar Das), **R** (Ram Das), **Ar** (Arjan), **T** (Tegh Bahadur), **G** (Gobind Singh); **K** (Kabir), **F** (Sheikh Farid), **Nd** (Namdev), **Rd** (Ravidas), **D** (Dhanna), **B** (Beni), **J** (Jayadeva), **S** (Sadhana), **P** (Pipa), **Ra** (Ramananda), and **SB** (Satta *and* Balwand)

Next comes the name of the *rāg* and its subdivision, as *Asa Chhant* or *Gauri ki Vār*, printed in italics, or the names of special hymns, which will be found in the following *rāgs* N *Sidh Goshti* and *Dakhni Oamkar*, which will be found in Rāmkali, N *Barah Maha* in Tukhari Chhant, and N *Alāhanıā* in Vadhans, AD *Anand* in Rāmkali; Ar *Barah Maha* in Mājh; Ar *Sukhmani* and *Bawan Akhari* in Gaurī, Ar *Ruti Sloka* in Rāmkali, and

Ar *Phunahe* at the end of the Book, K *Bawan Akhari* in Gaurī The clef (*ghar*) is given in Roman numerals where it is stated *e g* (R *Asa II*, 2 1)

Last comes the reference to hymn number and verse number, as given in the copy of the Granth Sahib with me The *Sawwaiyas* are quoted under the name of the Guru to whom they refer, and the verses are given consecutive numbering, it should not be hard to trace these few references

Little use has been made for this "Gospel" of the *Sri Dasama Guru Granth Sāhib* of the Tenth Guru, outside the *Akāl Ustat* and the *Vichitra Nātak*, the former a sublime hymn to God, the One worshipped by all true religions but unknown to sectaries, and the latter an autobiography of Guru Gobind Singh References are given by the name of the author and the hymn, with the number of the stanza, *e g* (G *Akal Ustat* 86) and (G *Twaprasadi Sawwaiya* 2)

Passages from elsewhere derived by me only from Macauliffe's "The Sikh Religion" are thus quoted *e g* (1 34 N), (1 xli AD), (5 243 G), which will be found respectively on page 34 of his first volume under Nanak, on page xli of the introduction to that volume, and on page 243 of his fifth volume under Gobind Singh These passages, not being traced to canonical scriptures, are printed in italics also

With all respectful diffidence I would beg my Sikh friends to adopt some such clear way of referring to

passages in the *Granth Sahib* in the future. It is not enough merely to refer to the *rāg* and *mahala*, as "Guru Amardas in Var Gaurī", nor even to the page number of some particular edition of the Book in their personal possession. All scriptures need some such easy mode of reference, which enables a text to be quickly traced in the original even by one who is not a profound scholar of its contents.

6. The Khalsa Panth

1. Admission

One is not born a Sikh, even if born in a family of Sikhs. After a child is born a friend recites the *mūla-mantra* (GGS 2. 3) and touches its tongue with sweetened water on the point of a dagger (*kirpān*), the mother later gives thanks in the Gurdwara, and the *Guru Granth* is read, the name of the child, boy or girl, being chosen as we have seen (p. cxlix). "Singh" is added to the name of a boy, and "Kaur" to a girl's. Part of the *Anand* is recited, *karah prasad* (made from flour, sugar and ghee) is made by stirring with a ladle and then given to all present after prayer has been offered and it has been consecrated with a dagger. This ceremony is almost parallel to Christian baptism.

Later comes the real parallel to the Christian "confirmation", when the Sikh fully enters the Panth and assumes all its privileges and duties. This is called the *pahul* or the "Amrit-rite", and it closely resembles Guru Gobind Singh's original initiation of the *Panc*

Piāre at the birth of the Khalsa in 1699 Five Sikhs in good standing represent the first five members of the Panth, while the candidates, including new converts, come forward after bathing and putting on the "five K's" (*panc kaka*) These are *Keśa* (uncut hair symbol of the saintly devotee), *Kangha* (comb symbol of discipline and order), *Kacchā* (shorts or drawers symbol of activity in service), *Karā* or *Kañgan* (iron ring on right arm symbol of self-control in action) and *Kirpān* (sword or dagger symbol of courage and self-respect) Their heads must be covered with turban or shawl, and they should wear no ornaments or signs of other religions—for Awat Singh Mahtab Singh thus defines a Sikh "Anyone who solemnly declares that he believes in the Ten Gurus and their teachings, and that besides the Gurus and Granth Sahib he does not recognise any other binding authority in religion, should be called a Sikh" (p 12) The candidates stand at first meekly with folded hands

One of the Five then recapitulates the essential doctrines of Sikhism, emphasising that it is primarily, as Awat Singh says (p 10), "a discipline of life and not a philosophy" It is a way to the One God through loving memory of Him while busy in the selfless service of His world When the candidates declare their faith, the *Amrit* is prepared as by the Tenth Guru, stirring sweetened water with a dagger in an iron vessel, portions of the Scriptures are read, and one by one the candidates receive five handfuls of *Amrit*, in their mouths, hair and eyes, while the Khalsa mantra is being repeated (p cvi);

the remnant of the Amrit is drunk straight from the vessel by all the candidates in turn, symbolising their brotherhood Then all repeat the *mūlamantra* five times and one of the *Piāras* administers the vows of discipline (*rahat*) to the neophytes, who have now become full disciples of the One Guru, true "Sikhs", members of the Khalsa Panth (sect of the purified), and heirs of its splendid traditions

2. Responsibilities

The membership of every human society requires the keeping of certain rules arising from its very nature At his initiation (*pahul*) the Sikh undertakes certain vows and obligations, which mark him out from all non-members of the Panth Let us consider some of these for a moment

(1) He promises never to be at any time without the *panc kaka*, which the Guru chose as the uniform of the Khalsa,

(2) All ideas of caste, of polytheistic deities and non-Sikh customs and rites are repudiated,

(3) He will abstain from the four *kurahāts* (mis-conducts) the shaving or cutting of hair or beard, eating meat killed in the slow way used by Muslims, adultery, and the use of tobacco or intoxicants in any form,

(4) Nor will he commit any *tankhāh* (penal offence), such as associating with apostates, dyeing or pulling out white hairs, giving or taking cash dowries, using drugs or liquors, revering non-Sikh shrines or

tombs,[1] raising monuments *over* the dead, etc A Sikh who does one of these things must confess in public before five *piāras* of the nearest local *sangat* (assembly) and faithfully do the penance they impose Those who indulge in a *kurahāt* become apostates (*patit*) and have to receive initiation afresh, after their penance has been performed,

(5) He will obey all regular *gurmatās* (decrees) and *hukamnāmās* (religious edicts) issued by an authorised meeting of the collective Panth at once of the four *Takhts* (thrones) Akāl Takht at Amritsar, Patnā Sāhib, Keshgarh at Anandpur, and Hazūr Sāhib at Nander in the Deccan Appeals against the voice of any *sangat* lie in the Akāl Takht, whose decision is binding on all Sikhs,

(6) He is expected to train his own spiritual life by frequently reading and meditating on the *Granth Sahib* and the *Dasama Granth*, by regular personal prayer, and taking a living part with other Sikhs in the religious and social life of the local *sangat* He will also serve all in need, irrespective of their caste or creed, beginning with cheerful menial work in the Gurdwara and the Guru's Kitchen, to the expenses of which he is entitled to give what he can,

(7) He is to observe the *Anand*-form of marriage after full maturity is attained, and at death the body is to be cremated or thrown into flowing water with the usual Sikh rites

[1] Guru Gobind Singh was himself once fined Rs 125 for saluting a shrine with his arrow, which he did as a test of his Sikhs

Above all, he is never to forget that he is a member of the Body founded by the Guru himself, to behave at all times with an eye to its honour and repute, to look on all fellow-members as his own brothers and sisters, and to strive ceaselessly to become worthy of the great honour conferred upon him by becoming a member of the Khalsa

3. Privileges

It is hard in a few words to sketch the gains of a man or woman on entering the Khalsa Panth, they are so numerous and some so subtle that only a deep spiritual insight reveals them A few shine out as obvious:

(1) He or she becomes a member, a part, of the Guru's own Body in the world, through whom the Guru works upon mankind, leading it to God The Guru himself said (See Sher Singh *Philosophy of Sikhism*, p 43) "*Khālsā mere rūp hai khās*" (The Khalsa is my very form), what strength, what courage, what inspiration, to know that this is true!

(2) He becomes an integral member, united with one of the noblest and bravest of religious groups in the world, sharing their great wealth of heroic and saintly tradition,

(3) He finds in every other Sikh a real brother or sister, ready and willing to serve him even to the sacrifice of life,

(4) Through the Guru's spirit imbued in every sentence of the Holy Book he is guided to the highest knowledge and love of God, wherein alone is true peace

and enrichment of the soul This fullness of intuitive understanding cannot be gained from it by any non-Sikh, however sympathetic he may be

4. On the Use of Outer Symbols

Some have wondered why, when the Guru in his first form as Nanak inveighed against the external show delighted in by yogis and sannyāsis and even by caste-proud Hindus, displaying *nāmam* and sacred thread corresponding to no inner reality, with their ceremonial "eating-squares", their offerings to the dead, their ritual pilgrimages, and filthy *prāhscittams*—the Tenth Guru nevertheless established the rite of *pahul* (initiation) and imposed the "Five K's" on all who would henceforth be accepted as real Sikhs

It is true that one may be—in a certain restricted sense like the *sahijdhārīs* and many "Sikhs" who form a part of Hindu or Muslim society as Vedantins or Sufis—disciples of the Guru by brooding on the *Granth Sahib* and on God's omnipresence always, serving Him by the humble service of mankind But as Lakshman R Pāngārkar says in his valuable Hindi life of Tukaram (1934), if one would truly enter into the spirit of any *sampradāya* (community) one must gladly embrace all the elements of its life, all its disciplines and modes of training, for the system of each *sampradāya* is a reasoned and scientific whole, whereof one picks and chooses by his own taste to his own loss and impoverishment

The Guru imposed these outer signs of a Sikh (1) as a test of the disciple's courage and firmness, it cost something to proclaim oneself thus visibly a Sikh when Sikhs were hunted down for torture and death Thus the wearing of long hair trained men in courage, in being ready at all times to be martyrs for the Faith, and thus greatly increased their love and faithfulness for Sikhism When laxity in such things creeps in to any community, their faith "grows cold", (2) so that Sikhs might know one another at once in any place and be sure of meeting brothers wherever they might go. The Freemasons' signs have the same purpose even today, and (3) the wearing of a common uniform strengthens *esprit de corps*, binds each individual to be morally worthy of the whole, creates a pride and a sense of participation in all the work of brothers of the same society

It may be that, as Dr Sher Singh tells us (p 107) "As time rolls on the shift of emphasis is becoming more and more on the external appearance of a Sikh than on his inner purity Intolerance and a narrow outlook on life are the natural consequences" Lakshman Singh adds "Baptism was (at first) wholly voluntary and never meant for all Sikhs, but now it is imposed on all converts and real belief in Sikh ideals is not asked for—so false conversions are common. Yet on the whole Sikhs do lead in social reform, and Punjab Hindus gain much from contact with them and the Granth Sikhism should once again be widely taught and spread on all sides to uplift the whole nation" of India

Yes, of course that is the remedy for any such pharisaical lapse, to which all human rites are liable as time passes on More education, the printing and distribution of portions of the *Granth Sahib* for a few coppers each, with translations into modern Punjabi and Hindi and an explanation from the standpoint of daily life, the adoption of the Punjabi language in Gurmukhi script as the official language of at least East Punjab, for which Master Tāra Singh and the Akālis are agitating today, the organising of regular missions among the Sikhs, to popularise the beauties of the Guru's hymns and to recruit men and women to spread the knowledge and love of them far and wide! Such activities will, under the blessing of the Guru in Granth and Khalsa, be a sure defence against the growth of any such superstitious reverence for outer signs while forgetting the inner reality, and will lead the Sikhs to that high place in Indian thought and life which they so fully merit, so that in a purified and revitalised Panth it may soon come true that "*Rāj karega Khālsā*" (the Khalsa will rule), and then we shall live in a real "*Rāma-rajyam*".

7. A Few Brief Notes

1. The Name of God

There is a thorough study of the Names of God in the *Granth Sahib* made by Dr. Sher Singh, to whom I am naturally indebted for most of the material used in these notes. He classifies these Names under various

heads, those which we shall meet in our own "Gospel" are noted here

Historical Names Hindu Bhagavān, Bishan, Brahm. Gobind, Gopāl, Gosain, Hari, Isara, Mādho, Murāri, Pārabrahm, Prabhu, Raghurai, Ram—of which the favourite are. Hari, Ram and Prabhu, *Muslim* Allah, Karim, Rabb, Rahīm, Rāzaq, Sāhib, *Sikh.* Mitu, Piāra, Prītam; Wahiguru.

Attributive Names Ek Oamkār, Anek, Kartār, Khāliq: Karan-Kāran, Hukami, Mūl, Tek, Adhar, Jagajivan, Prānadātā, Prānapati, Nirguna, Sarguna Mālik, Param-jot, Atma, Sarabjot, Sarabnivasi, Nere hi te Nera. Bhogi, Khalaq, Ape-āp, Sohang, Tat, Bhugta, Nirlep, Niranjana, Abhogi, Agama, Agādha, Sat, Sacu: Purakh, Akāla-purakh, Kamalanain, Mir, Shahanshah: Nirankār, Anīl, Akāla-mūrat, Ajūni, Abināśi, Acala: Abhed, Bharpur, Ached, Nirākār, Sarbham, Amo-lak, Sāgar, Dariāo, Ādi, Anādi, Beanta, Eko-veśa, Akāl; Adeśa, Sarba-biāpi, Hadūri, Dana, Antarjāmi: Sukh-sagar, Shahj, Gunatās, Gunimidhān, Anand, Binodi, Amrit; Dīna-dayāl, Anātha-nāth, Dayāl, Datar, Dukha-bhanjan Patita-pāvan, Bhagatavatsal, Baba, Pita, Mata, Kānt Khasam, Bhai, Mitar, Satiara, Sakha, Pīru, Piāra; Nirbhau, Nirvair, Abhul, Adol, Achal. Pavitra, Punita; Deva, Guru, Sat-Guru, Sundar, Manamohan, Sohnā; Raja, Patshah. Saca-patshah; Asipan, Sarba-Loha, Thākur, Alekh. Akarama

The multiplicity of His names is well summed up by the supreme name of Anām, "the Nameless"

2. Nama-Marga or Nama-Simran

Dr Sher Singh points out how false is the idea held by most European and Sikh scholars hitherto that the "repetition" of the Name meant for the Guru the mere utterance of one or more of these or other "names" of God with the lips That would have been the teaching of mere magic, of gross superstition, and Guru Nanak called such use of the "beads" a hypocritical show (cf AD *Gujri*, 4 1), this "remembering" of the Name is not a muttering with the tongue as so many think, but a communion in the heart (cf N *Malar* 6 2 and R *Malar* 7 3)

What, first of all, is the "Name"? Prof. Teja Singh (p 124) calls it "the manifestation of God or His attributes, His bounties, His mercies, from which we know Him", Dr Sher Singh says (pp 242-243). "In short, *Nām* is the sympathetic and aesthetic communion of man with man and with environments" It is "as much of God's real Being as He sees fit to reveal from time to time to His devotee" "A body is dead without life and a life is dead without *Nām*", says Sher Singh (p 233), it is "the link of the finite soul with its parent Infinite God", so that even "an animal is much better than a man without *Nām*" This self-realisation of God "does not come from without, rather it goes out from within" the heart, and it is when the heart of man loves, comes into an affectional relationship with the outer world, *i e*, with God in His creation, that *Nām* manifests in him, and then a feeling of ecstatic unity with the whole universe of which he is a part

leads to the man realising God in both his own body and in the universe as a whole

This realisation requires no book-knowledge in the practicant, it calls for no meditation or special training in yoga, but yet it affects his entire life and raises it as it were to a new and higher octave of experience It can be spoken of only in part as the aesthetic enjoyment of beauty and reverential awe or wonder (*vismād*), in a state wherein God, Universe and Self merge, as it were, in one sense of delighted admiration All three become that wonder, all three enjoy that wonder too (*cf* N *Asa di Var* 1 Sl 3) Now this practice, this *sādhana*, requires one outstanding qualification—a sensitiveness to beauty akin to that of the great poets. It expresses itself in an involuntary cry of "How lovely that is!" or simply "Wonderful Lord!" (*Vāhiguru!*) To such an ecstatic all the universe is full of beauty, full of wonder, pure and good, the artist divides things into ugly and beautiful and selects for his own purpose, the *vismādi* makes no such dissection of the world—to him a toad, a fungus, the workings of excretory organs are as wonderful, as divine, as the loveliest flower or sunset The true scientist also comes near to this concept, he too takes all he finds, dispassionately, as the material out of which nature has been built, and finds all of equal interest and beauty.

At first such moments of ecstatic realisation of God in the all are necessarily rare the practicant has to practise them, to practise the repetition of them, thus "remembering" God's "Name" As Teja Singh tells

us (p 24) "To practise *Nām* means to practise the presence of God by keeping Him ever in our minds by singing His praises or dwelling on His excellences" Yes, but this need not be misunderstood as limiting us to spoken words of praise, the aspiring love of admiration for God is itself enough Sher Singh says "Such an attitude is to be made permanent This is what is called the continuous remembrance or repetition of the name of God"

The soul in such a state will be found ever active in his own proper work for livelihood (*kirt*) and in service of others (*sevā*), he will not flee from one form of God (the domestic life) to another (the forest), knowing God is everywhere where He would have us be, and He places us just there! When this becomes a permanent, an unbreakable feeling of delighted union with His will, His beauty, His providence, His sovereignty—then we have what the hymns call "*liv*", an ecstatic oneness It is by being busy in the world about God's work, without forgetting Him but working in His Name and memory, that man becomes a *brahmgiāni*, a *jivan-mukt* or *panc*, and so attains the object of his earthly life

Then the egoism which has been a screen between Him and the beauty and glory of God's world falls away, "I" changes to "Thou", and God is seen in all; selfishness becomes impossible, and sin disappears, so that even the subconscious mind is purified and the dream-life is suffused with God This is not an easy, a quick path to tread, for it involves a total change of

personality even down into the unseen strata. Love for God becomes more and more direct, simple, instinctive, like that of the child for its mother's milk, of the fish for water, of the flower for sunlight and the rain. And it is the gift of God's grace, not earned by human merits, so we have to pray humbly to Him for success in our search for Him.

3. The Living Guru

Most great religions and reforms backslide from the high ideal given by their Founder almost as soon as he is dead Different ideas of his meaning arise in various groups of the disciples, and there is no one universal authority to resolve them, so they harden with time into sects and heresies, while the masses lapse back to some extent into the marsh from which they had been rescued. renaming their countless old gods as angels, and rationalising their superstitions by the names of sciences

As Teja Singh points out (*Sikhism*, pp 62-65), this could not happen in the case of Sikhism, because (1) the Founder arranged that he in person should teach, direct and train the young church or nation for 239 years after his birth in 1469, and (2) he contrived to continue the same control and guidance even after 1708, though personally invisible, through the *Granth Sahib* as inspiring the properly organised Khalsa itself This continuity of Guru Nanak's life, passing from one body to another of the Ten, "as one lamp is lighted from another" (Guru X), has been the certain faith of Sikhs from the beginning (*cf* AD *Sorathi ki Var* and SB.

Ramkali ki Var) It was clearly declared also by Bhai Gurdas in 1610 in his *Vars* (24 1. X *Stanzas*), by Mohsin Fani in his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* (ii, p. 253) in 1645, by Bhai Nandlal in his *Jot Bikāsa* in about 1692, while about the same time Bhai Kesar Singh wrote in his *Bansāvali-nāmā* "Consider all the Ten Gurus as Baba Nanak" (Teja Singh *op cit*, p 27). The testimony of the Tenth Guru himself in his *Bachitra Nātak* (*cf.* GGS 52) puts the matter beyond dispute for all Sikhs When the Guru realised the Sikhs had become able to lead themselves with his guidance veiled, he passed on that "light" received from Guru Nanak to the Khalsa which then became the mystical body whereof the Guru's "Word" in the Granth is the living spirit

At first sight this idea may seem strange to European readers, but Dr Sher Singh has pointed out how closely it resembles the doctrine of the continuity of life among certain high Tibetan Lamas Much is told us of this by Alexandra David-Neel in her remarkable book *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*, it is a striking fact that ever since the death in 1470 (the year after Guru Nanak was born!) of Gedundub, disciple of the great reformer of Tibet, Tsong-khapa, his successors ruling the Gelugspa (yellow-cap) sect were recognised as his "reincarnations" from the time of their accession. Nearly two centuries later, the fifth of these, Lobzang Gyatso by name, declared that he himself was actually an incarnation of Chenrezigs (Avalokiteswara), while his teacher the Tsang-panchhen-rim-poche (Tashi or

Panchhen Lama), was similarly a reincarnation of Odpagmed (Amitabha Buddha), from that time the continuity of life in the Dalai Lama and Tashi Lama is a matter of history This is a case of the soul of a saint or great man passing at will from body to body (*paradehapraveśam*) Nanak may well have acquired the power to do this from the *Siddhas* with whom he stayed in Tibet The idea is also not entirely unknown, we are told, among the Sufis and even in certain *maṭhs* of Hindu schools It is a curious fact that the Guru was much in contact with the disciples of Gorakhnath, pupil of Matsyendranath, who has often been identified with the same Avalokiteśwara

Teja Singh points out how valuable is such adaptability of the interpreter and ruler of a community to changing circumstances which the doctrine we are considering confers Of course, it is a sort of parallel to the Catholic doctrine of the Church as Christ's Mystical Body, perpetually guided by the Holy Spirit *when* gathered in regular Church Councils, through the universal sense of the faithful or teaching bishops, or by the Pontiff *when* proclaiming a doctrine of faith and morals for universal acceptance When a religious body has no such provision for continuity, it is laid open to constant splintering into new sects which form with every generation No such sects can exist in Sikhism, for those who differ from the Granth or the Panth cease to be Sikhs at all At the same time with this capacity to adjust to the new needs of changing society, there is in the *Guru Granth* the unchanging " Word " to hold

Sikhs for all time to the fundamental truths first given by the Guru [1]

4. On the Originality of Sikhism

Orthodox, modernists, foreigners have differed on this point, the most absurd claims being put forward by some to the effect that the Guru was a crypto-Muslim, a disguised Christian convert, a clever compiler of eclectic ideas, and the like

To me it seems there is no real problem here We have simply to ask ourselves whether the Guru was sincere or false when he claimed to be saying just what God taught him (*cf* GGS 3, 4, 53, also N *Tilang* 2-3-5, Ar. *Suhi Chhant* 3, and *Bachitra Nātak*, etc etc) Accepting the sincerity of these and countless other similar statements scattered throughout the Sikh Scriptures, we are left with no alternative to admitting the essential originality of the Guru's teaching as received direct from " God " through that intuitive realisation of truth which he himself called the " Name " History shows that, however clever it may be, no eclectic philosophy has survived much beyond the generation of its invention, yet the personal influence of Guru Nanak on his

[1] It is a rather curious fact that 239 years after his birth in 1469 the Khalsa took charge as Guru, and 239 years after the beginning of this second era, in 1947, it was called to take its place in a free India, its holy land was rent asunder, its members were scattered all over the country as perhaps they never were before This happened soon after the great revival of Sikh studies, Sikh national pride, and the popularising of Sikh Scriptures at a higher level, as during the 30's and 40's of this century, than ever before May it indeed be the omen of a new era of greater zeal among the Sikhs, of fuller religious education, and the spread of Sikh ideals into every corner of India!

disciples is certainly no less today than it was two hundred years ago and may even be held to be growing warmer and more devotional. Prof H C Kumar has also shown evidences from the *Japji* that Guru Nanak had direct vision and experience of the realities of the inner planes, that he had clairvoyant powers, and the same is told of most of the later Gurus by contemporary historians Such men do not build up their doctrines from collated accounts by others, they have no need for such tortuous methods The early lives of Guru Nanak agree in describing his commission as received direct from God, much as was the case with Isaiah, Zarathushtra, Muhammed, and most other Prophets in our human history This too, has always been the view of the orthodox Sikh

Dr Sher Singh has made a thorough study of this question, and on the whole considers that a middle position may be tenable Of course, the Guru spoke to Hindus and Muslims of his own day, had he been born in Western Europe, he must have used the phrases and ideas current there, but that would certainly not prove him himself indebted to Christianity Even today the Sufi and Vedantic preachers in the West have had to clothe their doctrines in terminology familiar to their hearers, as above all others perhaps the Manichean missionaries did in their days—assuming Parsi, Buddhist, Chinese, Jewish, Gnostic, or Christian guises according to the environment in which they worked Yet they did not preach Buddhism or Christianity, but the teachings of the Prophet Mānī

It is the same with all. Sikhism arose in India out of the sea of concepts known vaguely as "Hinduism" whipped to a storm, as it was, by the violence of the Muslim impact. The Guru spoke to audiences both "Hindu" and Muslim, to some he spoke in Persianized Punjabi, with words redolent of the Qur'ān, to some he spoke in Sanskritized Punjabi, with words recalling the Puranas, the Gītā and the Upanishads. He arose as the climax of a great religious and social reform among "Hindus", led by the Vaishnava saints and poets—a reform of liberalisation, of personalisation of God, of a great simplifying of religious life and thought, discarding many of the absurd exaggerations of caste and ritual, and concentrating on the loving service of a God of love. Side by side with this was the timeless group of forest anchorites, yogis, *siddhas*, with whom the Guru came in close contact and engaged in controversy—pointing out the extravagance in some of their ways and practices, insisting on the omnipresence of God at home as much as in the forest. He clashed also with the narrow bigotry of the Muslim leaders of the time, the Sheikhs and Mullās; he shared in delightful spiritual comradeship with at least one great Sufi of the Chishti line, Sheikh Ibrahim.

Among all these influences he kept to the truth received, as he held, from God direct, he wandered in many lands, not to learn but to teach that truth. If he met Christians in Travancore or Buddhists in Ceylon, this does not show that his doctrine owes anything to either, even where it coincides with theirs on certain

points It is as absurd to say the *Granth Sahib* reveals the Christian Redeemer as to say the *Gita* is the effect of Christian missionary influence on the poor benighted heathen The Guru may have picked up words and phrases here and there from those with whom he spoke; he may have woven these into the pattern of his revelation, but the teaching he gave the world was won "from his own undisturbed communing with nature, his own soul and with his Creator" during those days of solitary brooding in his childhood and early youth Sikhism is not a reproduction of earlier religions, but a profound modification of them, so profound that it cannot critically be regarded otherwise than as a *new revelation* altogether

Hinduism It is correct to say this is a culture rather than a single religion, the culture of the whole Indian people Sikhism is of course Hindu in so far as it is Indian in origin, yet even in the time of the Third Guru the Hindus recognised it as quite separate from their own creed, and a little later Fani, of Muslim origin, declared it to be separated equally from Islam Guru Nanak, though often referring to the Puranas, does not show any clear proof of having read any "Hindu" scripture for himself, but seems rather to rely on floating hearsay such as he would have acquired from the Hindus with whom he talked It is really absurd to suggest that Guru Gobind Singh's Puranic stories to awaken courage in his Sikhs imply in any way his own relapse into "Hinduism", nor does his elaborate play at the sacrifice to Durga show any such

thing either His teachings may be said to have a certain relationship to those of "Hinduism", much as the teachings of Christianity arose out of a Jewish environment and to some extent do reflect its higher ideals

Islam Mirza Ghulâm Ahmed, in his *Sat Bachan*, (1911) is quoted as putting forward the extraordinary claim that the *Granth Sahib* is simply a sort of commentary on the *Qur'ān esh-Sharif* and that Nanak was simply a Muslim preaching Islam to convert the Hindus Those of the Guru's own day evidently had other ideas when they so ruthlessly persecuted him and his disciples for many years! Indeed the Granth shows little sign of the Guru having direct personal knowledge of the contents of the Qur'ān, or indeed anything beyond what he could well pick up through casual conversations with Muslim divines during his preaching tours (*udāsis*) To say he owed his knowledge of monotheism to Islam were impossible to anyone acquainted with the teachings of the Vaishnava devotees of his age His hatred of idolatry and the outer show made by so many Hindu caste-men was only such as is shared by spiritual-minded men all over the world in many ages, and was by no means unknown among the Hindus also, Ekanath got into serious trouble for so totally ignoring caste rules as to treat untouchables and Brahmins as the same—which is indeed implied by the basic teaching of Vedānta.

That Guru Nanak may have personally contacted the Sufi Ibrahim and even the Vaishnava Kabir, whose

teachings are so close akin to his own that many of his hymns hold honoured place in the *Guru Granth*, does not mean that he became in any sense a disciple of either of these, it is far more likely and in harmony with the records that he met them as an equal friend or devotee Indeed, there is no evidence that he met Kabir at all, and as Sher Singh says, his humility was such that he would surely have referred to such a meeting had it taken place The date of Kabir is under dispute, most scholars favour 1440 to 1495, while Sher Singh and a few others put it earlier, from 1398 to 1443, it certainly cannot be claimed as long anterior to the age of Guru Nanak himself. But even the later date would make a meeting unlikely, Kabir was wandering through the plains of North India at the same time as the Guru travelled in the same area, but that in no way suggests that a meeting was inevitable —the area is large The differences between the two great men are also not to be ignored in considering the possibility of either having been disciple of the other

So, we come to this The Guru taught in a certain environment and had to clothe his teaching in words which that environment could understand, he had himself indeed arisen from the midst of that environment, and his own earliest visions of the truth had been received within its fold But he taught what he had received from "God" through direct experience of the truth Without a careful study of the nature of inspiration, which is so different yet none the less real in the Hebrew Prophets, the visions of the greater Gnostics,

the hymnists of the Ṛgveda and the nature poets of the West, it is impossible to analyse the real sources of Sikhism as it comes down to us from the Guru in his *Granth Sahib* It is enough for us to take it as it comes to us, to hear the lovely music in the truths he sang, to try to live the life of inspired service and practical devotion which he taught For these things the world will always be in debt to Guru Nanak and to those through whom he spoke in the succeeding generations

A BRIEF SIKH CATECHISM

1 *How did this universe come into existence?*

There was nothing but God, He willed, and out of the Word which expresses that Will the universe is being ceaselessly made

2 *What is God?*

The One Eternal and Infinite Unmanifest, who has manifested Himself to us through His works He is King, Father, Lover of all, abiding in all and also the Ocean of pure Being wherein all abide

3 *Where is God?*

He is in all that He has made, as their inmost Self

4 *Is there then no special temple for Him?*

The whole universe, the heart of each living being, the place where the Word is loved and sung—these are God's temples

5 *Why does God create the universe?*

So that He, being good and by nature the Giver of all, may give out Himself through its countless forms, and that they may all share His life of infinite blissfulness

6 *Does He desire to gain anything through this work?*

Being perfect, He can gain nothing for Himself, but He desires recipients of His love.

7 *Is matter eternal?*

No Through the action of God's creative power (*māyā*) it comes into being, and at His will it ceases to exist But its duration is of inconceivably vast extent

8 *Are Hell and the Heavens eternal?*

No Nothing is eternal save God and the soul which merges into Him All states and planes exist only until He brings the "Play" to an end

9 *Has this universe any real existence?*

Being created by the One supreme Reality, it is a real expression of His eternal truth (*sat*); but as it arises and vanishes at His will it has no real or independent existence of its own Compared with the Creator it is like "the shadow of a cloud", a "flying dream of the night"

10 *Is the universe good or bad?*

In itself it is good, because it is the visible expression of the will of the One absolute Good; it may become relatively bad for the soul which chooses it in preference to Him

11 *What is Sin, or Evil?*

The deliberate turning from the service of God to the service of the petty "self", and the seeking of worldly pleasures for their own sake That is, it is the wilful disobedience of what is known to be God's will

12 *How did Evil come into existence?*

God gave man free will so that he might choose Him above all, but a free choice involves the possibility

of wrong choice, man chose "ego" instead of his real Self, the Life of his life, that is, God

13 *Why does God let Evil exist?*

So that many may learn through effort how to reject all things save the love of Himself, and thus acquire those virtues which enable union with Him

14 *What does God do if Evil seems about to conquer the world?*

He sends a messenger with His own power to teach and inspire the people to righteous life, drawing them to Him through his own saintly example

15 *Is there a devil in the Sikh Religion?*

Sinners by rebelling against God's will are like "devils", but there is no great opponent of God who can challenge His omnipotence

16 *What is Man?*

The creature or child of God, mortal while he identifies himself with the perishable world and body, but with the power of becoming truly immortal through union with Him, until then, doomed to wander in the outer darkness of the world, unable to see and really love Him.

17 *Why did God create Man?*

So that a living creature might choose to love Him above all things and so at last unite with Him and share His glorious eternal work

18 *What is the origin of the individual soul?*

Like that of a spark from the One Fire, a wave arising in the One Sea The soul comes forth

from God, is always really in Him as a partial expression of His Will, and at the last manifests it perfectly in union with His perfect Self

19. *How was Man imprisoned in flesh?*

He found himself in a body of whose sensations he was conscious, thus, in confusion, he thought himself to be that body, whereas in reality he is as free as the air around

20. *What is Man's duty on earth to God, to other men, to himself?*

To love and worship God, holding His Presence always in mind, and doing all actions in His Name and to His glory, to serve and help mankind in all humility, gentleness and courage, fulfilling the duties of his state with perfect honesty, to aspire continually to become a perfect devotee of God, and to do His work on earth faithfully so that he may gain those qualities which enable His grace to unite him with God.

21 *How can Man become free?*

In contact with saintly persons, a continuous dwelling on the thought of God, and faithful discharge of duty, egoism perishes and man realises that his real Self is the One ever-free Formless God

22 *Can he do this unaided?*

No In order to break his bonds God's grace is absolutely necessary

23 *How does God help him?*

When he is ready to be helped, God sends him the intimacy of a saint, whose contact, teachings and

example awaken true spiritual vision in his heart and so set him free from bondage to the "ego"

24 *Why does not God give this help to all?*

His will it is that all should long for such aid, and prepare themselves by great effort for it, the moment any soul is thus made ready, His grace at once descends, and the saint, the Guru, gives enlightenment

25 *What is the result of righteous conduct?*

In this life virtues attract grace, and so they swiftly bring the soul to surrender and to union with the One supreme Good, in the other, God draws the righteous soul near to Himself so that it never falls again into the shadows of earthly life

26 *What happens to wicked men?*

In this life, they suffer by deprivation of grace and the enlightening bliss of saintly contacts, in the next, they suffer miserably in Hell, the results of their own bad deeds, until they fall back into incarnation and resume their wanderings until the lesson is well learned

27 *Can the soul be born again in a physical body, then?*

It must be, until it deliberately turns away from purely worldly delights in order to seek God with a full heart and sincere longing

28 *What should a sinner do to escape this evil lot?*

Repent of his sins and wash them away by ceaseless dwelling upon the thought of God, he can do this when by serving some saint with faithful devotion he has won his grace

29. *How can Man find God?*

With the saint's grace, he does all his actions and meets all the events of his life in the mood of conscious adoration of God, then his heart is so purified that God Himself comes to dwell in it and takes him to Himself in loving embrace

30 *Can the true knowledge of God be given by another?*

Not fully, the Guru's touch of grace opens the soul's eyes to God's light, which is always there, and enables him to see the Lord In reality it is God who gives the knowledge of Himself, but to that end He takes the form of the Guru

31. *Who really is the Guru?*

God, who dwells in the heart of every living being, who teaches all through the gentle voice of conscience, and appears "outside" in human form to those who crave such visible aid Really the "Enlightener" is the inner Self who recognises truth and embraces it when found in a human form or voice, a book, or the universe itself

32 *Was Guru Nanak a man or a divine Incarnation?*

All the "Incarnations" (*avatāras*) were men sent by God to do His work of saving the world age after age Guru Nanak, too, was such a messenger of God. But as *Guru*, his was and is to each Sikh the voice of God arousing the soul to true spiritual effort

33 *What is the relationship between the "Ten Gurus"?*

One divinely taught Soul, in full spiritual union with God, was teacher of men for several generations through these chosen holy bodies, so that the Sikh

be greatly aided by the chanting of His glories or the Guru's hymns, by the company of a saint, by the actual repetition of some one of His actual names—such as Hari, Rāma, Vāhiguru.

39 *What is the final goal of life?*

The total loving union of the soul with God. in His active work of creation and uplift, and in the blissful contemplation of His perfection

40 *Can you sum up this Religion in a few words?*

It is a life of active effort towards world uplift under the Guru's guidance, so that all souls may attain the final Goal It insists on human equality, and rejects caste, race prejudice, the use of images for the Spiritual God, and all external show of piety—insisting on absolute sincerity and persevering action for the love of God

SYNOPSIS

PART ONE—SIKHISM

Chapter One: THE PERFECT TEACHER. 1 When evil prevails the Divine Teacher comes forth with a message of peace and justice, a few blessed souls drink in the outpouring of God's grace 2 In such a dark age God called Guru Nanak and, though he protested his own unworthiness, bade him teach men His infinite glory revealed in His holy Name, creation 3 Nanak knows that he, a frail creature, is nothing of himself but in God's power he can serve mankind 4 Others may mock and slander him but as the messenger of God he is proof against their ill-will 5 He is miserable save in the company of this only Friend, absence from whom is a cruel disease cured only when a saint restores the broken intimacy 6 In union with this Beloved alone lies the highest bliss, wherein He is found always and everywhere Having reached that ecstasy, Nanak is now mad with love for God, 7 from whom he can never part again, because He lives in his very heart and makes it all divine 8 Because he relies wholly on God and finds all life's sweetness in Him, God helps him always

Chapter Two: THE GLORY OF GOD 9 Adoration to the One God who out of His own will created all things and, pervading all, blissfully maintains them throughout eternity! 10 All are like sparks from Him, the One Fire, and return to the

fullness of His life when illumined by the Perfect Teacher 11 Formless, infinite, omnipresent, and yet eternally free is He, who wears the whole as a radiant garment His glories are endless and numberless His names and uncountable His forms—yet He is ever *one* 12 Many try to describe this Ineffable, but have no power, those only know Him to whom He reveals Himself as the Secondless, and they are the world's Elect 13 Being at the centre of all hearts, He knows all that is in them, and yet, in spite of man's wickedness, gives all he needs, 14 joy and sorrow alike, and whatever He gives is good, the source of spiritual fruit and blessedness, because He loves us all 15 He is the Life of our life, the Light in everything, within and without, all is God, in loving whom the universe is loved and all dissolves in ecstasy 16 He alone IS, and all events and actions are really expressions of His will, our happiness lies in a glad surrender to that will 17 At His order Prophets come and go, He alone is real and eternal, the unchanging Cause of all this play of ceaseless change we call the world 18 By obeying His laws the whole universe worships Him, for He is in all No human rites are worthy of Him before whom the sun and moon are but lights waved in adoration

Chapter Three. MORTAL MAN 19 As the body and all worldly things must perish, it is useless to be attached to them and thus draw ourselves back into the snare of recurring birth and death 20 Affections for worldly things fill us with sins and trap us in the body, by true devotion to God we are cleansed from all sin and freed from the unreal 21 Rebirth comes from our identifying ourselves with the physical body, its pleasures, desires and passions, thus arise egoism, enmities and misery, which can be ended only by dissolving the separateness of the self and humbly serving God and all His children And this is union with the Beloved, true Liberation 22 Death is inevitable for all the born, in that hour man must face his destiny alone and stripped of all but his faith in God and the virtues rooted therein To the devotee who wants only the Lord death is very delightful

23 After death comes a strict enquiry into all the acts and hidden thoughts of every soul, and there is exact recompense for all the good and evil it has done in life 24 No rites can save from the just results of action, it is only sincere love for God that can deliver from Hell and the miseries of a rebirth separated from the one real Friend of souls 25 Taught by the Perfect Teacher and immersed in thoughts of God, the devotee finds in death no terrors but rests blissfully in the Beloved's arms

Chapter Four· THE TRUE GURU. 26 Only with the help of a saint who himself loves God and has become one with Him can the soul find and attain to that Divine Friend 27 The saint is one who is uniformly kind to all and intensely devoted to God's eternal presence, such a one alone can teach the soul 28 This is the only real Muslim, Brahman, Yogi—one wholly surrendered to God and doing always His will Outward professions matter little, for true renunciation is in the heart 29 God is not found by learned talk but by silent brooding on Him and on the words of His saints, in this "meditation" egoism is burned away and virtues flower under the soft showers of His grace 30 Union with God is interior, spiritual, and needs no external show or special garb, the essence of true Religion is to live selfless in the world

Chapter Five. THE DIVINE NAME. 31 The Unmanifest can be reached only by adoring and serving the Manifest Deity. This devotion to God's "Name" washes away the stains of sin and fructifies in all spiritual beauty, it is the richest gift of God's grace 32 God is our very life, how can we live save in continual communion with Him? To turn from Him is real death, and not the mere dropping of a body 33 This holy Name is the source of all true happiness, for how can sorrow enter where God, the Ocean of Bliss, pervades? By treasuring that sweet Presence in the heart man becomes like, nay, merged in God Himself

Chapter Six. THE WAY TO GOD. 34 Nothing can lead man to God but the teaching and service of a saint, and that holy contact is His special gift to the few, 35 who surrender unreservedly to Him with heartfelt devotion 36 God is in all, He is to be loved and served in all, with kindness and humility We should come to Him with a child's simple trust and ask for His grace, which liberates and fills with joy 37 As God is in all, none are to be hated or despised, the heart must be pure, and for that no ritual cleanliness suffices Holiness depends not on diet but on true devotion and the patient cultivation of virtues 38 We can safely rely on God our Strength, who gives all delight to those who serve Him with full surrender and total trust 39 All worldly things are perishable, unreal, God is the sole Reality and, joined by love to Him, the soul finds eternal life and joy, its only worthy aim 40 True bliss lies in the ceaseless practice of God's Presence in the heart and in all around Such a devotee shares His infinite beauty and, *recognising and gazing on the* Beloved everywhere, lives in a trance of love's delight, doing all his work for Him 41 Those who thus live in God are His saints they are ever blissful, and blessed are those who meet and serve them, for they reveal God's beauty and grace even in their own persons 42 Saintliness is God's own gift to those who sincerely seek and long for Him, finding in Him alone all their delight 43 But this love for Him comes to those only who with the saint's help have driven "self" out of the heart's inmost shrine, He can be found there by one whom He calls to the meeting within 44 That call comes only when our love for Him is so intense a fire we cannot live without Him, when we weep and grow mad with longing, then He gives His grace and takes us in His arms

Chapter Seven: UNION WITH THE BELOVED. 45. Though in our blindness we think God far away, He is always with us 46 The devotee longs to meet her Beloved and is in burning misery while she feels herself alone, she is ready to die for one sight of Him, without whom life is to her like death

47 She knows that He must first deck her with His own graces and beauties, and only then will He appear to her and let her find happiness, she herself unaided can do nothing to win His love 48 Yet she must try to prepare herself for Him by washing in His purity and faithfully obeying His will, seeing her thus adorned with His own jewels, He will come to her 49 Tenderly He takes her then to His embrace as His own pure bride, filling her with overflowing joy in the knowledge that she is eternally lost in Him 50 He graciously accepts her little services and greatly honours her, His poor little spouse, taking away all her sorrows and blending her life with His own 51 Eternally freed from the egoism that so long kept her separate from God, the human bride is for evermore ecstatic in His embrace and calls the whole universe to share her joy

Chapter Eight: THE GURU'S DESCENT. 52 Nobly did Guru Nanak do God's work through the bodies of the Nine first Gurus of the Sikhs and firmly established the Religion 53 Then God called Guru Gobind Singh to protect it from the violence of unbelievers and the craft of compromisers, and he too nobly performed the task 54 In its hour of need God sends the True Teacher who loves fallen humanity, he brings the message of truth and love which is real freedom Essentially all religions are the same, for they all worship the same One God in various Names The Sikh Religion is one among the world's religions, yet it recognises God's Word and His saints in others also Hereafter the Teacher will be seen in the Scripture and in the Community, the true Sikh will cling to the worship of God and the Guru's teachings, and so will come at last to life's eternal Goal

PART TWO—THE GURU'S HYMN

Chapter Nine: JAPJI, THE GURU'S HYMN. 55 The One Infinite and Eternal God cannot be reached through the

deepest meditation or speculative thought but only through obedience to His will 56 He creates and governs all beings ordering every event, and each according to his own abilities tries to express His action and mighty power 57 The only real worship we can offer Him is a ceaseless loving memory of His goodness, no act of ours can earn His grace, which is His noblest gift that glorifies our souls 58 This constant brooding on Him destroys all our defects and sorrows, it exalts us to the highest knowledge wisdom and goodness—to the very threshold of divinity 59 Steady adherence to His known will, whatever form it may assume, saves us from all evils, keeps us in the straight path, and guides us to the highest goal 60 All created things in our endless universe obey God's will and thus contribute to His endless glory—even sinners, by reaping the fruits of their own wicked deeds His will rules all, for He is present and reigns in all 61 The love of God purifies the heart from all sin, though each soul has still to receive the harvest of its own deeds, before this omnipotent love religious acts and external virtues have little value 62 Only God knows the secrets of His own work in the countless worlds and His own infinite generosity, and none else can fathom them Nothing is equal to the ceaseless loving thought of God 63 God and His righteousness are the most precious of all things though every creature tries to utter the truth he fails utterly, for it is inexpressible 64 In His glory God sits in the highest Heaven, ruling all the universe and receiving the various adorations of every creature in each of the worlds, they come and go, but He remains, the eternal changeless One 65 Adorning ourselves with all virtues and the jewel of self-surrender, let us truly adore Him, the infinite and all-pervading Lord of all 66 Yet we can do nothing of ourselves all comes only from His grace He gives us grace and then watches how we use it, well or ill 67 After transcending this physical plane of strife between Right and Wrong the soul ascends through the higher planes of Variety, Beauty and Power, to the fifth, the very dwelling of God Himself 68 He sends His grace to those who work at

self-purification through obedience to the Scriptures, down here we have to choose between God and the false petty "self", and according to our choice, so is our future state—a sad wandering in the outer darkness, or blissful residence with God

CONTENTS

EK ONKAR SATIGURPRASADI

PART ONE

SIKHISM

PRAYER

(O Lord, grant) to the Sikhs the gift of (true) teaching, the gift of loyalty,[1] the gift of faith, the gift of heroic sacrifice,[2] the gift of the Name—bathing in the holy tank of nectar,[3]

the power to read, to contemplate and understand the Guru's holy Book [4] (all of you) say Glorious is the Guru [5] (*Ardās*)!

[1] G *rehitā*, *lit* the quality of being able to do without, i e, the readiness to give up all other things for the ideal

[2] *lit* giving the head

[3] *i e*, Amritsar, where Guru Ram Das prepared the holy tank for Sikhs to bathe in

[4] *lit* *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*

[5] the literal meaning of the Name of God as specially honoured by Sikhs—*Vāhiguru* The Name is a response after each part of the prayer

CHAPTER ONE

THE PERFECT TEACHER

The hour of deepest darkness precedes the dawn, and it is when human hopes are at their lowest God is at hand to save His children When wild men from across Indian's western borders swept like locusts over Punjab's fair fields, carrying slaughter and famine, He sent among the sorely stricken people His chosen Messenger to tell of His eternal love for them, and to teach them how to find in Him a perfect Friend and Consolation Guru Nanak showed the humility of all true saints, but he showed also the quiet firmness of God's elect, unmoved by the world's criticisms, he pressed on to secure the victory of God's cause by his own perfect faith and his passionate love for God and man Thus he attained the perfection of his own life, and at the same time saved millions who through the centuries enrolled themselves as his disciples (*sikh*) and therefore pupils also of the Eternal Guru who is over all

1. The Coming of a Teacher

1. When the world is in trouble it prays sincerely, the True One listens with attention,

and in the kindness of His nature grants consolation,[1] He gives orders to the Cloud[2] (1: xli AD), and nectar rains down in torrents[3] (Ar. *Sri III*, 2. 14). (But) the thirst of very few is quenched (Ar. *Gauri*, 154· 1); to few is the Word (of God) taught by the Guru (N. *Maru Solhe*, 15. 15). Among a crore (of souls) very few are (God's) servants, all the rest are worldly (folk)[4] (Ar. *Gujari*, 2. 1). It is the one who thirsts for a sight of God who uplifts the world (Ar. *Gauri*, 131. 2), (and now) he himself has stood up and remains (to do) the work of the saints, (saying) (Ar. *Suhi Chhant*, 10· 1): "To punish the wicked, to slay demons, to destroy the guilty have I come;[5] I have arisen mightily to crush the oppressor, to uplift the fallen, to drive back hell" (G. *Akāl Ustat*, 211)!

[1] *Cf.* GZ 52. 1, Gita 4. 7, etc. The theme recurs in all religions which teach a Divine Saviour.

[2] The "Cloud" is the Prophet who brings to men God's refreshing help, just as the dark rainclouds of the monsoon bring life and greenness to the fields parched by India's summer heat.

[3] *i.e.* the sweet waters of eternal life.

[4] *Cf.* GH 49. 2, Gita 7. 3. It is the experience of all religious teachers.

[5] A close parallel to Gita 4. 8.

2. Thrice blessed is the man who has come (to us), by whose grace the whole world is saved![1] This is the object of his coming, that by contact with a man (of God) the Name might enter the minds (of men) (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 28. 8) And now has the decree of the Merciful come into force, that none should give pain to another, that all should dwell in happiness, and that this should be a benign régime (Ar *Sri III*, 2: 13). He who preaches to others but himself does not practise comes and goes in births and deaths,[2] the world is saved by the teaching of one in whose heart the Formless dwells. (Ar *Sukhmani*, 5. 7).

God always answers the appeal for aid, but His help benefits only those who avail themselves of it. The student learns nothing from his teacher unless he attends in the class and makes his own efforts to comprehend and follow the advice so freely given him. Alas, few indeed in every age are those who really seek God—most of us prefer the worthless toys of worldly life! But those who turn to Him, who sit at the feet of His Messenger, always find the immortal bliss which he has brought to men An age enriched by many such would be indeed the "Kingdom of God", a true "*Rāmarājyam*"

[1] Cf the welcome to Zarathushtra in GZ 26 3

[2] Rebirth is here the effect of insincerity, those who belie the truth they know cannot dwell in the inner realms of truth

2. The Call of Nanak

1 (*One morning after his bathe Nanak saw God,*[1] *who gave him a cup of nectar with the blessing:*) "*I am with you; I have made happy both you and those who take your name Go and repeat My* (*Name*) *and cause others to do so too*[2] *Practise repeating My Name, charities and bathings, worship and contemplation I have given you this cup of nectar as a proof of My regard* (*for you*). (1. 34 N)."

2 (*Nanak arose and prostrated before God, and then he sang:* "*What am I before Thee, my God?*) Were my life (to last) for crores and crores (of years), were (my) food drinking the air,[3] were I (to dwell) in a cave and saw neither moon nor sun, nor slept even in a dream, still I could not grasp Thy glory! How can I describe the greatness of the Name?[4] O True

[1] So too Jesus sees God at his baptism in water (GMC 21 3, GJ 2) and Zarathushtra on emerging from the waters of the Dāitya (GZ 27 2-4)

[2] On the significance of "repeating the Name" see the Introduction

[3] A renowned saint met by Sri Ramakrishna was known as Pavahari Baba, whose name means "the air-drinker", the idea connotes the extreme of harmlessness and asceticism

[4] *lit* How great do I call the Name? *i e*, How can *I* call the Name great?

and Formless One in Thine own place, . . . if it please (Thee) show mercy! Were I cut down and chopped up again and again (into tiny pieces), ground (to powder) in a mill, burned in the fire and mingled with the ashes, still I could not grasp Thy glory! How can I describe the Name? Were I to become a bird and fly away into the skies, were I to pass beyond the sight of everyone[1] and neither to drink nor eat anything, still I could not grasp Thy glory! How can I describe the greatness of the Name? Nanak (says): Had I lakhs of tons of paper and the will (to use it all) after deepest study, were (my) ink never to come to an end, and were I to move the pen like the wind,[2] still I could not grasp Thy glory! How can I describe the Name" (N Sri, 2: 1-4)?

3 (*God said*) "*You have seen My sovereignty, O Nanak!*" (*and Nanak answered Him:*) "*O, Sire, what is there that any mortal can say* (*of that*)? *What can be spoken or heard after what I have seen? Even the lower animals sing Thy praises* (*in silence*)!" (*And then Nanak sang this*

[1] *lit* were I not to come into the sight of anyone

[2] The same thought is found in GI 21 1 and in several Hindu scriptures

hymn:)[1] (1:35 N): "One Supreme Being, the true-and-eternal Name, the Creative Person fearless and unopposed, the timeless Form unborn and self-existing, (known) through the Enlightener's grace; true in the beginning, true in the night of ages, (He) is true even now, and will be true (eternally), (says) Nanak" (N. *Japji*)!

4. (*Then said God:*) "*O Nanak, be kind to the one on whom My look of grace may fall, and then I too shall be gracious* (*to him*) *My Name is indeed the Divine First Creator, and you are the divine Guru.*" (*And Nanak sang this hymn*) (1:35 N): "Thou art an ocean of generosity and wisdom; how can I a (mere) fish grasp the whole? Wherever I look, there art Thou, separated from Thee I should fall to pieces and die! I know not the Fisherman, I know not the Net; (but) when I fall into trouble, then I remember Thee! Thou (art) omnipresent (while) I believed (Thee) far[2]; whatever

[1] These important verses read thus *Ek Oamkāru sati nāmu kartā purakhu nirabhau niravairu akāla mūrati ajūni saibham gura prasādi Adi sacu jugādi sacu hai bhī sacu Nānaka hosī bhī sacu* The first sentence plays almost the same part in Sikh prayer as the Ahunavairya in Parsi, the Paternoster in Christian, the Fatha in Muslim, and the Gayatri in Hindu

[2] St Augustine says the same in his immortal *Confessions*

I do is present to Thee—Thou seest even when I try to hide (I have not acted) in Thy work, nor in Thy Name, (yet) I eat just what Thou givest[1] There is no other door (to ask at), to whose door (then) shall I go? Nanak utters this one prayer: Soul and body are all with Thee, Thou art near and Thou art also far, Thou art in the midst, Thou seest and Thou also hearest, by Thy creative-power[2] Thou didst make the world! Nanak, whatever pleases Him, that is a command to be accepted" (N *Sri*, 31 · 1-4).

This reconstruction of the scene when God called Nanak out of his simple village home to carry light and joy from one end of India to the other, is built up from the sources used by Macauliffe in his valuable life of the Guru It is apparently based on an almost contemporary account, the *Janamsakhi*, or biography, by Sevadas

When God assures Nanak of His approval and promises His help, the saintly lad protests his total unworthiness to praise God's infinite glory, how much less fit must he be to teach others so to do! But God reminds him of his own direct vision of that Glory, thus suggesting that he can at least tell as much as he himself has seen Nanak replies that only silence can describe the Ineffable, continuing with the *mūlamantra* of all Sikhs, which proclaims the Eternal Unknown God whom the true Teacher's grace reveals Again

[1] *i e*, I receive whatever Thou hast destined for me even without meriting it

[2] G *kudarati*, almost the Hindu *māyā-sakti*

God asks Nanak to dispense that grace to all with the same generous love as God has given it to him, Nanak finally yields and agrees to do as much as God enables him to do, without whom he is but nothing and on whom alone he totally relies

3. The Humility of Nanak

1 From age to age I tenderly serve (God) (Ar *Sri III*, 2: 21); He has made Nanak the servant of (His) feet, turning (his) mind to affection for the Lord (Ar *Ruti Slok*, 4: 2), (so that) he continually broods[1] upon the beloved God (Ar *Sri III*, 2 7) and abides in Him who is seated in every heart,[2] acting (so as) to please the true Guru (N *Sidh Goshti*, 3) From myself nothing can come, O God (Ar *Gauri*, 14. 1)! It is God who appointed (me) for the one work, and I carry it out as He desires (Ar *Sri III*, 2: 3). Gladly have I come and gone at (His) command; Nanak is always obedient (to Him) (N *Sidh Goshti*, 3)

[1] *dhyāidā*, the word commonly translated by "meditate"; but strictly "meditation" is a mental process of logical thought, while *dhyāna* is more correctly "contemplation", the wholly delightful process of peacefully holding the heart and mind on the chosen "Object", God

[2] Note that such immanence does not spell pantheism or identity, God is *in* all, but not *limited* to all, infinitely transcending all that He has made

2. I confess fully all that I have done; utterly defiled, I wash (myself) thoroughly (N *Majh ki Var*, 6 Sl 2), I am not good (N. *Maru Kafi*, 2· 8), I know not, alas! (how) to adore God (Ar *Sorathi*, 13: 2). Among the lowly of humble birth I am the lowest of the low, how can Nanak rival the great in their very presence (N. *Sri*, 3: 4)? I am a fallen sinner and a great deceiver [1] (N *Sorathi*, 5: 1); I am always straying into offence, but Thou (art) the Forgiver (Ar. *Bilawal*, 34: 1), Thou, the Pure and Formless One (N. *Sorathi*, 5: 1)! There is none so kind as Thou, (while there is no) sinner like me Save, O save, my God, the man who seeks Thy protection (N *Bilawal*, 3: 4, 1)! I know nothing and my understanding is (but) little; yet in my heart I adore the Name of the Lord (Ar *Asa*, 69. 3-4)!

3. To be firmly established in God the Seat [2]—such is the Guru's teaching I received, (and that) if the disciple understand and

[1] In such expressions of humility the *Guru Granth* in places resembles the Hebrew Psalms, it is the foundation of spirituality to realise that oneself is nothing, and God is all

[2] God is the "Ground" of the whole universe, its "warp and woof" whereon the vast web is spun, to abide in Him is to be still while all else moves

realise, the self, then being true he will merge into the True One (N *Sidh Goshti*, 3). Naturally attractive is the fruit of humility, the fruit my true Guru has given me (Ar. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 1·1) Where Thou observest the lowly, there Thy gracious look (is his) reward (N *Sri*, 3. 4) I have built a real temple[1] and to it led the Guru's pupils; (and now) I wash (his) feet, and wave the fan, and ever and ever fall before him prostrate (Ar *Sri III*, 2: 10). (In this way) Namdev, Trilochana and Kabir, (Thy) servants, and the tanner (Ravidas) became liberated (souls) (Ar *Gujari*, 10: 2)!

4. I see no friend but Thee (N. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 1:5), Thine is my soul, all the body Thine (R. *Gauri*, 20: 1)! I am Thy slave, the dust of Thy servants' feet (N *Tilang*, 1·4)! In Thy lotus feet is the home of my heart, . . . with the rope of love is Thy servant bound, . what is the use of escape (Rd *Asa*, 4:1, 3)? I am nothing at all; He alone IS, He is the One in the Beginning and the End[2] (Ar *Asa*, 83. 4)!

[1] G *dharamsāla, lit* hall of charity, or inn The idea may well be the old one that this world is an inn where we can stay only a short while (cf GGS 22 1), or that it is the place where we are to show good deeds

[2] G *kama kichu nāhī ekai ohi āgai pāchai eko soī*

Nanak insists that he himself can do nothing for God, but in his perfect faith that God has chosen him for this work he will go on with it His loyalty to God, his deep affection for Him, his ready obedience to His lightest word—all promise his ultimate success He knows it is only by thus clinging to God as his infinite Strength that he can do anything at all, by faithfulness to the teaching of his own (inner) Teacher, by truly serving and guiding the disciples, he can give real homage and love to his Beloved Lord

In himself he is very small and weak, ever ready to stray from the right path, but God is always at his side to lead him, to raise him from the mud of failure God seems specially tender to the weak and helpless, as a shepherd carries the tiny lamb on his own shoulder, so He goes after the lost soul with unfailing patience till He brings it home This is why He often chooses saints from the lowest families and makes them stars of inspiration and guidance to the millions Nāmdev the converted dacoit, Trilochana the shopkeeper, Kabīr the foundling weaver, Ravidās the cobbler—God was not ashamed of their company, but raised them to the heights of spiritual perfection

How can Nanak help loving so good a God as this? He knows that He has tied his heart with love's unbreakable bonds, ("I have loved thee with an everlasting love"—*Jer* 31 3) and now he is wholly God's, dependent for everything on God's sweet will, finding in Him the only Friend

4. The Saint is Criticised

1. If one acts honestly[1] and then loses (by it), (if) there is no (real) penance in the

[1] *lit* true, G *satu kare*

house of penance, if one on taking the Name (meets) obloquy—these are the signs of the dark age[1] (N *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 1: 3). *(So is it today:) When I remain silent they say I have no understanding in my heart, when I speak they say I chatter too much; when I sit they say I have spread my bedding,[2] when I go away they say I have thrown dust on my head,[3] when I prostrate they say I am performing devotions through fear. I can do nothing by which I may pass my time in peace*[4] (1. 80 N)!

2 (But if I) be slandered I shall go to Heaven and make the precious Name dwell in (my) heart; the heart becomes pure when there is slander, for the slanderer washes my clothes (K. *Gauri Purbi*, 71: 1)! The more he slanders the saints, the happier the saints feel (Ar. *Asa*, 41 · 3), all the words saintly people hear .. and whatever happens (to them) they feel that to be happiness (Ar *Sukhmani*, 23: 4)!

[1] *Cf.* the signs given in GH 34, GZ 48 4, GMC 47-48, and in the Vishnu Purana, etc

[2] *i e*, I impose myself as an unwanted guest

[3] *i e*, I insult my host by signs of mourning etc (cf Mt 10 14).

[4] The passage in italics is not in the *Guru Granth Sahib* and so must be regarded as inauthentic Yet it well expresses the truth of how the world receives the saint, (*cf* Mt 11 16-19 and many places in the Qur'ān)

(As for me), as much as the Lord has taught me, so much does my tongue pronounce (Ar. *Asa Chhant*, 5 4); I speak those words (which) the Master gives (to me), (Ar *Sri III*, 2: 14), as the word of the Master comes to me so exactly do I make it known (N *Tilang*, 5 1)!

The age of darkness (*Kaliyuga*), into which God sends His light by some Messenger, can easily be known by certain signs the righteous are made to suffer, honesty pays no worldly dividend, those who profess to be spiritual make only some empty show while no religious spirit is in their hearts, and the saints who love God in various revealed Forms are slandered and abused This is what Nanak himself finds, men criticise whatever he does. With the same unreasonableness in earlier days they afflicted Muhammed (GI 34-36) and Jesus (GJ 63 and GMC 35), they complained of all his actions But the idle chatter of fools cannot shake the God-inspired, like his predecessors, Nanak knows well that such slanders, bravely borne, only serve to purify his own heart The saint rejoices at trouble, for it too is the gift of the all-loving Providence and sure to work out for good if he be faithful to his God-given task In mocking him, the foolish critics really mock at the infinitely wise—children throwing stones towards the sun, and being struck by them instead as they fall to earth

5. Nanak Longs for God

1 O God, what is my condition in Thy creation? Without God I cannot live for a

moment[1] (N. *Barah Maha*, 1)! Without God (my) soul burns away (as) a sacrifice (N. *Sri*. 1: 1)! Seeking and seeking I have become a wandering beggar[2] and roam athirst for a vision of the Lord (Ar. *Gauri*, 118: 5). I am miserable without the Beloved, (I have) no friend; I drank nectar from the devotee[3] (N. *Barah Maha*, 1) and a Saint has told me the way to the Lord (Ar. *Gauri*, 127: 1). On asking my Guru I have seen there is no other refuge (but God); if I had **all other luxuries,** might I not on seeing (them) foolishly forget (Thee) so that Thy Name might never come into mind (N. *Sri*. 1: 2)? Why should I forget the Beloved, my life's support (N. *Gujari*, 2: 1)? God[4] is the only love (N. *Asa*, 37: 1)! Without Him I cannot live a moment[1] in the world, such is the thirst of (my) yearning (N. *Malar Ashtapadi*, 1: 1)!

2. (Once) I forgot the Master and took to the enjoyment of pleasure; then disease arose

[1] *gharī*, *lit.* about 24 minutes, but often used for a very short time.

[2] *bairāgī*, *lit.* one who has given up all desires of the world.

[3] *gurmukh*, *lit.* one who sits before the Guru and listens carefully to whatever comes from his mouth, so, disciple, devotee, saintly person. *Nectar* is the knowledge of God.

[4] *Parbrahm*, the Supreme Absolute.

in the body—a pain of separation and a certain pang of hunger (N *Malar*, 7: 2, 1). A doctor was called for a remedy, he took (my) hand and felt the pulse, the stupid doctor did not know the trouble was in the mind (N *Malar ki Var*, 3 Sl 1)! O doctor, he is a real doctor who first identifies the disease and then administers such a remedy as will radically cure diseases (A *Malar ki Var*, 3 Sl 2). Without the true Guru (my) disease will never go (Ar. *Bhairo*, 20: 3)

3 When God shows kindness to anyone, He takes his hand and leads him out of (all) disease Fetters burst (when man) has won the company of a good man, Nanak says (that) disease is expelled by the Guru (Ar. *Bhairo*, 20: 4); from the Guru a pure nectar is obtained, **and** on drinking that nectar he is always satisfied with grace and (his) thirst is quenched (AD *Majh Ashtapadi*, 20: 2, 17: 1).

4 I have become a mad *sannyāsi*,[1] famishing for a sight (of Thee); day after day I beg at (Thy) door so that I crave for a sight (of Thee); I beg at the door to receive alms [2]

[1] G *atītu*, *lit* one who is without possessions, defects, etc

[2] Dr Rabindranath Tagore was also fond of this figure, so also Thakor Haranath (cf GN *Appendix*)

(N *Tilang*, 2: 1). Give (me) a sight (of Thee), O Lord of Kindness, and grant (me) understanding that I may attain the Goal (N. *Barah Maha*, 14)! I am a sacrifice, ready to cut myself in pieces (for one look); look graciously for one moment [1] (N. *Maru Ashtapadi*, 9: 1)! Thou art my Comrade, Thou alone my Friend; . . Thou art my Husband. Thou art my only Ornament; without Thee it is impossible to remain for an instant! . . . Whom have I but Thee, my Beloved and life's Support? The state of (my) heart Thou alone knowest, Thou alone art the beloved Friend, (and) from Thee have I obtained all joys (Ar. *Gauri*, 18: 1, 128: 1). Nanak's burning (pain) was taken away on meeting the dear Beloved (Ar. *Asa*, 143: 3).

Even now he enjoys that love for God he owes to his mysterious Guru, yes, but the lover is never satisfied and always craves a closer union—"Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart!" is his constant cry Every moment without the rapture of that full union he has known in rare ecstasies is an intense agony, he can no longer live without feeling God at his side and in his heart Driven by the burning thirst for love's full satisfaction, Nanak has wandered for ages through life's wildernesses, seeking, seeking the infinite bliss of union Guided one day by a true saint of God, he found the way to His beloved feet. And after that one vision of perfect

[1] *hika bhori*, the short time of actual sunrise.

loveliness he cares no more for earth's treasures, nay, he drives them from his heart lest they form a mist around him and hide God from his longing eyes

He tells us how intense was the fever of that longing, until God at last gave Himself to him People thought him mad because he could not play like other boys, or take his food in time, or work at any business, but always wandered here and there seeking, seeking the unseen Beloved of his soul Such a fever can be cured only with one medicine, no other remedies avail. The heart must be filled with the sweetness of its Love, the poor mortal seeker must be folded in God's " everlasting arms ", He who shot love's arrow in the heart must Himself pour balm into the wound, or it can never heal And God sends His saint to draw the stricken lover, distracted by the hot fever of *viraham*,[1] to the cool unfailing Fountain of perfect Love, where for evermore he can quench his spiritual thirst with the nectar of his Divine Beloved

Recalling those dreadful days of agony, perhaps passed in earlier lives on earth, Nanak becomes once more in memory the roaming beggar, asking at every door for one who can show him the Immortal God Only when he no longer held anything to be of value, when he was ready to cast his very life away for the love of God, when he realised that God alone could give it meaning and that without Him life must be intolerable agony—only then did he find the priceless Pearl, embrace the eternal Lover, and for evermore enter into the moveless peace of the Bridegroom's Arbour

6. Nanak has Found Him

1. The (very) memory of birth and death, of pain and fate[2] passes away; Nanak's

[1] The agony of separation

[2] The word *kāla* means time, death, and so fate

happiness is that which pleases the Lord (Ar *Asa*, 113·4), bliss arose in the heart after meeting the beloved God (AD. *Sarang ki Var*, 32·2) Easily[1] I met the Friend and, acquiring virtue, became like (Him) in nature (N *Barah Maha*, 15), When I came to know myself, (my) light merged in the Light; **Nanak**[2] says· Now my heart has known and honoured God (K *Bilawal*, 11·3); my mind and body are drenched with the love of God[3] (R *Gauri*, 27: 2) God and **Nanak**[2] have become one, no one can distinguish (them). (K. *Ramkali*, 3: 6)

2. By repeating "Thou, Thou" I have become Thou; in me no "I" remains.[4] When the difference of selfhood was once removed, wherever I looked there wast Thou (K. *Sloka* 204-205)! When I saw (Thee) then I sang (Thy Name), and then I a man took courage

[1] *sahaji, i e*, naturally, without resistance, habitually, intimately

[2] In the original, of course, the name of *Kabir* stood here, but for the sake of uniformity I have replaced all such authors' names by "Nanak"

[3] *merā manu tanu Hari rangi bhinnā* the meaning of *rang* is rather *colour* and so *dye*, as the lover takes on the same hue as the beloved it obtains a secondary meaning of *love* We may read "are steeped in the dye of God".

[4] *tūm tūm kartā tū hūā, mujh mahi rahā na hūm*

(Nd *Sorathi*, 1. 1) In every heart God speaks (Nd *Mali Gaura*, 3: 1), after seeking and seeking, the Self is found (And now) I have become mad (by His) secretly stealing away the mind, I have been easily merged (in God) (K *Bhairo*, 7. 4, 4 4). Bliss, intense bliss! I have seen that Lord! I have tasted, I have tasted God's sweet essence, God's sweet essence has welled up in my heart, I have become intimate[1] (with Him) through pleasing the true Guru (Ar *Asa Chhant*, 1: 1)! People say that **Nanak**[2] is insane, **Nanak's**[2] secret (only) God has perceived (K *Bhairo*, 6: 4). (It is this.) Wherever I look, there is God (Nd *Gond I*, 2. 4)!

3 (My God), all is Thine, (and) Thou art my Beloved, night and day I am thrilling with love (for Thee) (N *Barah Maha*, 2)! When (I have) Thee, then (have) I all, Lord, Thou art my capital![3] In Thee I dwell in happiness, in Thee lies my triumph! Thou art (ever) unattainable, immovable, and I

[1] *sahaji*, *i e*, naturally, without resistance, habitually, intimately

[2] In the original, of course, the name of *Kabir* stood here, but for the sake of uniformity I have replaced all such author's names by "Nanak"

[3] *i e*, I have invested my all in Thee Thou art my only wealth.

must (ever) fall back exhausted while uttering (my love) What can I ask? What say or hear? I hunger and thirst for a sight (of Thee) (N. *Suhi Suchaji*, 2. 1-8)! The *chatrik*-bird [1] cries "Prio, Prio!" and sweet is the *koil's* [2] note (N *Barah Maha*, 2); by the Guru's word I have obtained the Lord, the prayer of Nanak is fulfilled! (N. *Suhi Suchaji*, 2: 10)!

And now that long agony has passed into his memories, the long ages of separation from his Lord have ended, Nanak finds perfect bliss in the sweet company and delightful service of his Beloved The intimacy of their contacts has transformed him into a living likeness of his God, nor can anything now come between them to disturb that perfect union The petty candle-flame of his self has faded in the glory of the risen Sun, and he rejoices in that eternal mergence into God—lost as the little wave in the endless sea

It was indeed only that petty self, with all its vanities, which so long held him apart from God, when its walls fell, when he let the sunlight pour like a cataract into the dim corners of his heart's chamber, all darkness fled away and he knew himself irradiate with eternal Light Then came Jubilation, seeing God everywhere around him, he knew no more of pain and loneliness, now he rejoices in the visible presence of the infinite Beloved To the eyes of a purblind world he is indeed mad, for its foolish little ambitions and

[1] *papīhā*, this bird's cry resembles the word for "beloved", it is said to await the first drops of rain from the monsoon cloud, so too the devotee accepts no substitute for God's grace

[2] often miscalled the "Indian cuckoo"

griefs have for ever dropped from his view, but to the eyes of the wise, who see, he alone is sane, for he knows nothing but the One who is all in all

Nanak knows Him, and therefore he is full of love for Him—for who could know the infinitely Lovable without dissolving in a surging tide of love for Him? In Him who is all good, Nanak finds all peace and happiness, never can he attain to the utmost depths of the Infinite, that is true, but he is ceaselessly thrilled by plunging deeper and deeper into His unending glories, and finds anew in each a boundless bliss What can he say of God beyond the cry "Beloved, Beloved!"? His human birth is thus fulfilled, taught by the Real Guru in the heart, Nanak has found the Beloved of all the ages, and in His embrace has entered on eternal bliss

7. He Dwells in Nanak's Heart

1 Thou pervadest every every place[1] (Ar. *Sri III*, 2: 16); (so) I know (Thou art) not afar and admit (Thou art) within (me too), recognising (myself as) God's mansion (N. *Barah Maha*; 6) (for) in my heart I hold Him who is immanent in every place (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 1: 1) I abide in the Name, and the Name has come and abides in (my) heart (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 4: 5)

2. Hear Thou, O God steeped in sweetness,[2] my Beloved! Thou wellest up and

[1] *tūm thāni thanantari ravi rahiā*

[2] *rasa bhinne rasa* means the sweet *juice* of a fruit, so *delight. sweetness, love*

overflowest in (my) mind and body without a moment's intermission. . Thou dwellest in heart and body and face, the Life of the World pervades (my) heart and body, at the Guru's word I experience love. How could I forget (Thee) for a moment?[1] I surrender (myself to Thee)[2], I live by singing (Thy) glory! No one is mine, and to whom do I belong? Without God I could not exist;[3] having sought the shelter of His feet, I dwell there, and (so my) body has become pure (N. *Barah Maha*, 3, 14, 3). **Nanak** says: Persons who know love and devotion become pure[4] (K. *Sorathi*, 3: 4).

Knowing and loving God, who is all, and in all, Nanak can no longer for a moment be apart from Him No more does he see the fish, the bird, the tree, the star, the silent hill at night, the restless river, and ever-moving waves—all is God, instinct with His enfolding love God is in all that meets the eye, and in his own heart that little 'self', which hugged its wretched separateness so long, no longer usurps the throne but has yielded to that same God, who now reigns in glory.

[1] *gharī*

[2] *hau balihārī lit*. I (am) a sacrifice, *i e* I give myself (for Thee)

[3] *lit* remain.

[4] Kabir here wrote "perfect", by a slight change Guru Arjan made it "pure".

Nanak is still, at peace, resting in the arms of that perfect Love who rules his life No longer can the fierce fevers of mind or body rise to disturb his heart's perfect health, pervaded as it is by the triumphant Beloved King Never again for a moment can his mind wander from that endless Peace which has at-oned him with its own infinite blessedness, purifying him from the stains of the long wanderings abroad Being merged in God, his Life—as He is indeed the Life of all, though many know it not—he shares God's perfect purity and finds all joy in a continual adoration of His infinite gloriousness

8. God is His Helper

1 As the cowherd guards and keeps watch over cattle, (so) day and night (God) cherishes and guards the soul, keeping it in happiness.[1] Here and hereafter protect (me), O Kind to the Poor,[2] and so satisfy with a gracious glance the one who seeks (Thy) protection! Where I look, there art Thou pervading, save (me), O Guardian (of souls)! Thou art the Giver, and the Enjoyer Thou; [3] Thou art the Support of Life (N *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 17: 1-2)! No

[1] An image certainly taken from Sri Krishna as the guardian of the cows, or souls, but recalling the "Good Shepherd" of GMC 28, GZ 55 etc , GH 1.

[2] G *Dīnadayālā*, a favourite name for God also among Vaishnavas

[3] It is God who gives, it is God also in the human soul who receives.

kingdom do I desire, I want no Liberation, (but only) a love for the lotus feet in (my) heart[1] (Ar *Devagandhari*, 29: 1)!

2. The Lord's Name tastes sweet (to me) (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 23: 1); O my Beloved, I live by brooding on the Name, without the Name life could not be! . . The mind is contented when it gets the Name, . . (and now) my true Guru has established the Name (in me) (R *Sri*, 2: 1)! God's Name is my father and mother, and God my relative and brother[2] (AD. *Gauri*, 17: 3); I have put my trust in God, and God is my support, I rely on Him because there is no other path but God[3] (R. *Asa II*, 2: 1).

God is always on the alert to protect His Messenger and will not fail to look after Nanak Indeed, so full is the Guru of his love for God that he can see none but Him everywhere, in all pervading. Friend and foe alike are but forms of Him, sent by His loving care to guide the soul home to Him The only treasure is a

[1] Cf *Bhāgavatam*, 3 29 13 In his *Jagannāthāṣṭaka*, Sri Krishna Chaitanya writes "I do not beg for a kingdom, O Lord, nor for gold and jewels, nor do I ask for a beautiful bride, so eagerly desired by men O mighty Lord of the universe, do Thou reveal Thyself to me!"

[2] Cf *Prapanna Gita*, 28 "Thou art indeed mother, father, friend, comrade, knowledge, wealth, Thou art indeed my all, O God of Gods!"

[3] God Himself is the only way that leads to Him, as love alone can led to love, and trust alone to trust

real love for this so kind a God, Nanak cannot be put off with any other gift but the gift of the Divine Person Himself.

Nanak has found by experience how sweet is the brooding upon the beloved Name, the essence of that all-perfect Personality, he knows that life itself is involved in that kind of prayer, for without it life would be but the brute existence of a worm, empty of real happiness. He rejoices that God, through the inward Teacher of his heart, has put that love for Him in the very centre of his being, in true Religion—which is indeed "the falling in love with God"—is man's only safety, only real friendship and consolation.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GLORY OF GOD

To that tortured age Nanak brought the old old message of the eternal God who loves us and in whose love alone we can find our peace. It is He from whom at the beginning all came, it is He who acts in all who act, who lives and loves in all who live and love, who is at last the final refuge and home of all. Though Himself ever distinct from His creation, He yet pervades all that He has made—for apart from Him nothing could exist. Formless, and yet revealed by every form that is, manifest and yet eternally unseen in His own Self, beyond all thought and sense, whom no names can name because all names are His—who can describe or understand this Infinite, save His lover inspired by His own grace? Omniscient, He knows our every need, all-generous, He supplies it, all-good, His every act is for our welfare. At His bidding Religions arise, Prophets speak out His will to men, they die and are forgotten—but He remains, eternally the King of all, adored by all creation, each creature worshipping Him through its own nature and abilities. How can man's rituals avail to honour so universally adored a Sovereign of the universe?

9. The Creator of All Things

1. To Him I bow who holds the Arrow[1] in His hand; to the Fearless One I bow; I bow to the God of Gods, who is in the present and the future (G *Vichitra Natak*, 1: 3)! I bow to the Primal One Supreme Being who emanated[2] sea and land, the earth and sky, the First Person Unseen and Immortal, (whose) light shines forth in the fourteen worlds,[3] . the Inner Knower of all hearts, . far from all, (yet) near to all. . . He takes delight in the play of the fourteen worlds, and again mingles them within Himself. . He is not absorbed in any one love but mixes in the light of all (beings),[4] the Death of all and Maker of all (G. *Akal Ustat*, 1-10)!

2. In the very beginning of all was Darkness;[5] no Earth (or) Sky, (only) the boundless Will, no Day (or) Night, no Moon (or) Sun,

[1] The "arrow" symbolises God's purposive Will, which none can resist.

[2] *pasārā, lit* spread out

[3] seven above, and seven below Bhūh (earth), Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, and Satya, together with Tala, Vitala, Atala, Sutala, Rasātala, Talātala and Pātāla, the underworlds

[4] God enters into, but is not caught up in, all thoughts and feelings

[5] *arabada narabada dhundhūkārā*

(only) the Brooding in formless Ecstasy![1] . Nothing else was there, only the One, . nor can anyone speak of or describe a Second. . . Himself unseen, He revealed (all). . . He watched as He kept making, and expressed the Will (N. *Maru Solhe*, 15: 1, 4, 6, 13, 15). By the Supreme was the Creator produced,[2] the Supreme made what things are in the mind—from the Supreme arose the mountains and the ages . He created the whole world with ease (N *Dakhni Oamkar*, 1: 1-3, 2: 1), forming (it) with careful thought (G. *Akal Ustat*, 36), (and) He Himself selected names (for all things). Further, He made Nature,[3] then taking (His) seat (in her) He watched with delight (N *Asa di Var*, 1). He Himself, having created (all), was pleased, and He Himself received glory (N. *Maru Solhe*, 15: 6).

3 At first, when God extended Himself, the world was created by Him (G. *Vichitra*

[1] *sunna samādhi lagāida, lit.* He absorbs (Himself) in featureless trance

[2] That even the Creator is secondary, derived from the One Unmanifest, has always been a commonplace of Asian religious thought, it entered the West, for a time, through the Gnostic schools

[3] *kudarati*, the divine creative power (*māyā-śakti*)

Natak, 2: 10); He Himself created (and then) recognised Himself Separating sky and earth, He spread out a canopy, establishing the firmament without pillars, He uttered the Word[1] Having produced the Sun and Moon, He put light (in them); He brought about the wonderful drama of Night and Day (N *Malar ki Vai*, 1)

4 (O God), Thou actest and causest to act, establishing (all things) (Ar *Majh Ashtapadi*, 2: 8), pilgrimage and rites, meditations and ritual bathings--nothing else is worthy of Thee (save love)! How am I to describe (Thee)? Thou sittest on the eternal throne, (while) all else come and go (N *Malar ki Var*, 1)! Everything created is Thine, nothing at all is ours (Ar. *Majh*, 24 3)!

5 Call everyone noble, let no one seem low (to you), the One created (all) forms,[2] the One Light is in the three worlds (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 14. 6) In the One is all, and in the all the One! (N *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 8. 5)! Ever and always Thou art One, creating Thyself

[1] The meaning is clearly, as in other scriptures, that *by* uttering the creative Word He established sky and earth, etc

[2] *lit* vessels (*bhānde*)

Two (as a) Play! (N *Majh ki Var*, 3) (Thus) from being One Thou hast become Endless, and in the One art reabsorbed, (says) Nanak (Ar *Majh Ashtapadi*, 2: 8). Whatever is made is (made) by Him, all that exists shall likewise be merged (in Him); . (O God), the various forms that are always appearing are Thine and in Thee shall they be resolved. (AD. *Gauri*, 15: 1-2)

Nanak begins his message with a humble prostration to this great God, the Source and Goal of all, who resides in all He tells us how all things evolved out of the Divine Will—even the Creator Himself arose from that One Ineffable Infinite, who now enjoys the Play from His moveless seat in the heart of all that is. Such a God is far above, far beyond all that we can say of Him, far transcending any worship we may offer Him, and because He who is in all is infinitely perfect, we dare not regard anything He has made as low or vile, unworthy of His boundless skill and goodness Indeed, all is He, manifested as "Many" solely that He may enjoy the bliss of reuniting all in the eternal "One"

We may profitably compare Nanak's picture of the beginnings with those in the *Rgveda*, the Egyptian and Babylonian texts, the book of *Genesis*, the writings of Hermes In the infinite Darkness of the Unseen arose the eternal Light of God Manifest—wherein He brought forth the things which are, planning all, and rejoicing in their perfection (*Gen* 1 31), He too it was who put "names" to all things, and so inbreathed in them their essential being It is He who does, has always done, all, and when our eyes are freed from the veil of ignorance we see only Him in all around us

10. Is Himself their Goal

1 In a thousand pots one air,[1] the pots break and the same (air) remains (Ar *Suhi*, 1: 3) As from one fire crores of flaming sparks arise, though (it be) one by one, they will unite again in the fire,[2] as from one dust heap many tiny specks of dust fill the air and again mix with the dust heap; as crores of ripples are produced from one river (and) the ripples of water all become (just) water—so from the All-Form[3] appear unconscious and conscious beings springing from Him, (and) all are merged in Him (again) (G *Akal Ustat*, 87).

2 One can know fully Him whose work this is if absorbed in the Guru's word (AD. *Gauri*, 15: 3), (for) without the Guru's word no understanding is gained (N *Ramkalī Ashtapadi*, 3: 6). When the Guru is met the Master is realised, (that is,) says Nanak, the door to Liberation[4] (N *Maru Ashtapadi*, 2: 8).

[1] *ākāsa*, *lit* "ether" or "space", but these words do not fit the context in English The word is common in Vedantic use

[2] More than any other single passage, perhaps, this shows the predominantly *visishtādvaita* position of the Guru's thought.

[3] in Gurmukhi, *Biswarūpa*

[4] *mokha duāru*

The endless stream of individual souls (*jivas*) come from God like sparks from the One Fire, they fly away from Him, and then sink back again into the Flame from which they rose   Can sparks exist if there be no Fire? Can the soul exist if there be no God? It is when the false separateness of the spark ceases, when the enclosing vessel of clay is broken and the enclosed air or space mingles with the limitless air or space around, when the wave sinks back into its parent sea—then the human soul finds its way back into the heart of the Divine, and the Truth is known

And this realisation of the Truth comes to each soul, this "blowing-out" or *nirvāna* comes to each little spark, when the cool breeze of the Guru's teaching blows upon the aspirant   It is God's grace that brings the true Teacher to the readied pupil, one word from that Teacher tears away all veils and shows the oneness of lover and Beloved—which is earth's final secret for all her children

11. God is Infinite

1. The Unseen, Infinite, Unattainable and Imperceptible has no time (or) destiny; Born (and yet) Unborn, Unaging and Self-existent, He has neither moods nor fancies[1] (N. *Sorathi*, 6: 1). God is without birth and death

[1] *alakha apāra agamma agocari, nā tisu kālu na karamā, jāti ajātī ajonī sambhau, nā tisu bhāu nā bharamā*

In this striking couplet we find an attempt to describe some few of the qualities of the Supreme God   *kālu*, death, time, fate, *karama*   binding actions which lead to effects which must be undergone, *bhāu* the Skt   *bhāva*, mood, emotion, etc , *bharamā*· illusions—a refutation of the doctrine that God is deceived by His own *māyā*, and so caught in the trap of illusion

(G. *Akal Ustat*, 31), (being) Infinite, only He (can) know Himself (R *Asa Chhant*, 7: 1) He has neither form nor colour, nor even outlines,[1] (but) is manifested by the true Word (N *Sorathi*, 6 2), formless (and yet) with form, He is Himself the One *Nirguna-Saguna*.[2] (Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 2) Unrelated and Unstained, God [3] is hidden within every bosom; in every breast there is the Light (N *Sorathi*, 6: 2-3); great is (His) glory when He in Himself (is all in all) (N. *Asa di Var*, 2 Sl. 2)!

2 Thou art the Maker of all, everything (is) Thy glory—as Thou pleasest, so (Thou) makest it to move; All is subject to Thy Word! The Personal Lord (art) Thou, the Almighty;[4] no one is so great as Thou, the Word is Thine (and) Thou art the Mover of all (R *Asa Chhant*, 7. 4, 3) All light is Thine (N. *Sorathi*, 6: 2); Nanak, the Blessed One is warp and woof (of all) [5] (Ar. *Bhairo*, 24· 4)!

[1] *nā tisu rūpa varanu nahī rekhiā*

[2] *i e*, Without qualities and at the same time with qualities There are no *two* Brahmas, as Sankara is falsely said by some to have taught there is only *one*, but in that One are both the Unmanifest and the Manifest

[3] *Brahamu*, the Absolute, to be known only in true Yoga

[4] *Purakhu Sujānu tūm paradhānu*

[5] He is the infinite " Ground " of all, as Tauler also taught

3 Thy Names are many and (Thy) forms (are) endless; how many are Thy virtues[1] cannot be told (N. *Asa*, 33: 1); (but) Thy (real) Name is the Formless (N. *Asa di Var*, 5). How many Names! No end is known (to them)! There is no other like Thee, O God (N. *Ramkali*, 3: 3)! Thou art One, the many others (are) Thy forms; Nanak knows Thy mysterious play! (N. *Asa*, 25: 4)! There is the One, is there any other? Thou alone, only Thou (N. *Majh ki Var*, 13 Sl 2)!

God everywhere and always! Never was a time when He was not, never will time see His end, no possible spot in all the boundless universes unfilled with His glory! What form is His, of whom all forms are but veils to temper that glory for our poor feeble sight? He is formless in that all forms are His, no one alone, He is qualityless in that there is no quality not in Him, no virtue which does not arise in and from His all-perfection All this universe is but the ever-changing waves dancing on the surface of His unfathomable deep, all obeys His will, from whom comes the light and power in all that causes them to be What Name is exclusively His of whom all words are names? No word can fully describe the Infinite, no names express the Ineffable Glory that is He When He alone exists, has real and independent being, how can there be a Name to mark Him out from others? There are no others

[1] *gunas*

12. His Greatness is Untold

1 How many utter words from mere hearsay,[1] . no one knows an end (of them) (N *Maru Solhe*, 12. 6)! Everyone hears, and calls (God) great, but has anyone seen how great (He is)? The extent (of Thy greatness) can neither be grasped nor uttered; those who speak (of it) are held lost in Thee (N *Asa*, 1:1)! Thou remainest aloof and none can attain to Thee, that is why Thou art called the Endless One (G *Puranas Introd.*). O my great Master, fathomlessly deep and brimful of excellences, no one knows how great is Thy extent (N *Asa*, 1. 1)!

2. He to whom the Unseen has revealed Himself can understand the ineffable story (N *Maru Solhe*, 12. 6), this is (His) quality: that there is no other, nor has there ever been, nor shall there ever be (N *Asa*, 2. 3) God is as He (is), and I remain rejoicing in singing His glory (K *Sloka*, 122) If all were to join in trying to describe (Him), they could neither add to nor decrease His greatness (N *Asa*, 2 2), even if a hundred poets were found they

[1] *suni suni ākhai leti bānī*

could not complete a particle[1] (of the tale), even by weeping (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 1: 2)! Let all the thoughtful meet and think their utmost, (still) they could not utter even a fraction of Thy greatness (N *Asa*, 1: 2).

3. All truth, all zeal, all goodnesses, and the great qualities of perfect persons—without Thee no one can fully attain, and when Thy grace is gained none can keep them away. What can the poor talker (do)? Thy treasuries are filled with (Thy) praises; but what can he do whom Thou givest this gift[2] (N. *Asa*, 1: 3-4)? The world itself also comes and falls at the feet of those to whom (God) Himself gives greatness, . to those whom God Himself protects how many others will come running, . . . while who will not oppose the ones whom the Supreme has smitten (R *Gauri ki Var*, 14 Sl. 2, 18 Sl 1, 12)? Nanak, it is the True One (who) arranges (all) (N *Asa*, 1: 4)

Since man attained to speech he has vainly tried to express his sense of the Infinite that lies all around him and within, but his feeble and halting words cannot reach even a shadow of God's glory The mind itself

[1] *tilu lit* a seed of *til*, one of the tiniest *of all seeds*

[2] So Prof Jodh Singh

falls back dazzled from that height, fettered to the earth, as the boy's kite cannot reach the blueness of the sky. Even the vast universe itself is but a tiny speck upon His robe!

How then can we speak of Him, or know Him for ourselves? Of our own power it is impossible, yet the Omnipotent can reveal Himself to His infinitesimal creature if and when He will. It is His grace that teaches man what He is—even though the skill of all his wisest cannot compass a tiny fraction of His glory with the boldest sweep of their united efforts. He alone conveys the beatific vision of Himself to those whom He has chosen, and then strong in His strength these saints of God become invincible, before their quiet gaze the terrors of cruelty and sin fade away, and all joys hasten to their side. God's grace does all, He gives victory and defeat, life and death, day and night. None can resist His elect, none can save those whom He has doomed. And He is all good, all wise.

13. He Knows All

1. (Seated) in the mind, (God) sees all and with a look of grace moves (all) (N. *Asa dī Var*, 16); the Great Sovereign, the Supreme Lord, made the universe to watch (it) (N. *Asa Patilikhi*, 24).[1] The same who made (now) watches (N. *Tilang Ashtapadi*, 1: 1); He knows everything which is happening (Ar. *Gauri*, 2: 2), He sees, understands and knows all, being everywhere within and

[1] *pātisāhu paramesaru vekhanako parapancu kīā*

without (N *Asa Patlikhi*, 24); He who made the creation, it is for Him again to look after (it) (A. *Asa di Vai*, 23)

2 The Inner Knower of all bosoms (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 3·7) knows everything; my Lord knows all states in advance (Ar *Asa*, 42: 3, 128: 1) The Kindly One indeed daily perceives secrets, yet does not in anger withhold (men's) daily bread[1] (G *Twaprasadi Sawwaiya*, 2), He knows every veil[2] of every bosom,[3] and takes away its disease, its grief and guilt (G *Akal Ustat*, 7, 10). Sad when (His) saints obtain sorrow, He finds happiness in the happiness of the righteous (G *Rahiras Chaupai* 12).

From His hidden throne in the heart of every creature in His universe God watches all the Game that He has set in play, and knows everything that is going on everywhere Being one with each soul He knows its needs, hears its silent prayer even before it can be put in words, sees the thought of mischief lurking in the depths of the wicked heart, and yet remains perfectly detached and impartial, like the sun He "shines alike on the righteous and unjust" Knowing the purpose

[1] most alliterative in the original it reads *rozī hī rāja bilokata rāzaka rohh rūhāna kī rozi na tārai* This is rather typical of the style of Guru Gobind Singh

[2] *or* curtain, the idea being that we cannot hide our hearts from Him

[3] I have distinguished between *ghata* (bosom) and *mana* (heart)

of each incident in the agelong Drama, He never interferes with its working out, He allows the wicked to prosper until perhaps the very last act, and yet He silently guards from all real harm His chosen actors who are devoted to Him and to His Play, even when they seem to suffer grievously For He is one with them, He shares their every feeling, He takes part in every joy and pain of theirs, as does the loving mother in her child's

14. Gives All

1 Glories[1] are in the hand of the Great One; He gives to whom He pleases (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 1: 6), He Himself gives the qualities of greatness, He also has the (good) work done) (N. *Asa di Var*, 16) If it pleases Him He gives greatness, if He pleases He gives punishment (instead) (N *Asa Ashtapadi*, 11: 4); (but) what comes from Him is not evil (Ar *Sukhmani*, 23: 7)—whatever God does, that being done by God is pleasing to devotees (Ar *Gauri*, 1. 4), **they** consider the Lord's doing as sweet[2] (Ar. *Asa*, 88: 1). "O Lord," (they say), "from Thee do I receive (this), . . what Thou givest I take as happiness[3] (Ar *Majh*, 33: 3)! Thou art the

[1] *or*. greatnesses (*wadiāīā*)

[2] *prabha kā kīā mīthā mānai*

[3] This is the doctrine of the French school of the 17th century, as typified by *Abandonment to the Divine Providence*, By Fr de Caussade, it is also the "Little Way" of Ste Thérèse de Lisieux

gratifier of all the heart's desire (Ar. *Majh Ashtapadi*, 3: 3)."

2 That which pleases Him takes place; Nanak, what (can) man (do) (N *Asa Ashtapadi*, 11. 7)? Living creatures are upheld by Thee; . . bad (or) good, we are Thine (Ar *Sorathi*, 93: 1-2)! What (can) those who serve Thee (really) give to Thee[1] (N. *Malar*, 1 2)? **They themselves** remember Thee! (in their need) (Ar. *Majh*, 21: 3); they never cease from begging and taking (from Thee); Thou art the Giver of Life, Thou art indeed the Soul within the lives of all (N *Malar*, 1. 2)

3 He is the Spring, and all the world (is His) Garden (AD. *Basantu*, 17: 4), wherever the King is, forest and glade burst into blossom, the beauty of spring everywhere is spread abroad[2] (G *Akal Ustat*, 268). Nanak, the Giver is one, there is no other besides (AD. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2 8), (and) the Lord's chief

[1] *cf* the glorious hymn in GH 24 1, and "We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be!"

[2] In Guru Gobind's original

jaha taha mahīpa bana tana praphula,
sobhā basantu jaha taha pradula

function is kindness to devotees[1] (Ar *Gujari*, 12: 1) My merry Friend is called the "Friend of all", all consider Him their own, and He saddens no heart (Ar *Maru ki Var*, II, 7 Sl 2), He cherishes and fondles people like (His own) children (Ar *Gujari*, 12: 1), (saying to them). "If thou remainest Mine, (then) all the world is thine" (F *Sloka*, 95)!

He is the King, Omnipotent, He is the Stage Manager and allots parts to each player in His cast, and when the curtain falls it is He who gives rewards to those who have played the best, or reproofs to those whose shyness or forgetfulness have spoiled their acting Knowing Him as the Author of the whole Drama, the actors welcome whatever He may say or do to them, for it is certainly for their good So God's saints are always happy, even in the midst of dreadful suffering, because they know they are still in the Beloved's tender hands, and it is He who lovingly cuts away from them the abscess of sin which destroys their spiritual health

Indeed, those who cannot thus surrender to His will and find it in all events of daily life, must pass through endless misery in this world; for He is Sovereign, and there is no escaping what He chooses to send to each of us He is King, yes, but He is also the joyous Lord of Beauty, the generous Providence who gives at every moment exactly what each child of His requires—friends, books, joys, pains, quarrels, losses, gains, all circumstances of his life He is the Source of

[1] *bhagati-vachalu*, a favourite title of Sri Krishna also But that Sri Krishna is the same One Lord whom Guru Arjan praises here.

all we have, of all we are, and there is nothing which is ours that has not come from Him That we know He is kind and good, being the very heart of our heart, inseparable from ourselves and sharing in all that comes to us—helps us to welcome all events of life, knowing they cannot but be for good He is indeed our loving Friend, one who has Him, who is all, has all the world, and more

15. And Pervades All

1. In every single place Thou art, the One present everywhere alone (Ar. *Majh Ashtapadi*, 3: 2); all comes (to be seen) by the gracious look (as) real when the spirit has become detached[1] (K. *Maru*, 3: 3). If He throws (His) look of grace,[2] when I gaze intently there is no other besides (N *Asa Patilikhi*, 13), (yes,) my Lord is immanent in every place (Nd. *Prabhati*, 1: 1)! Steeped in love, my Master is immanent, pervading everywhere (N. *Sri* 25: 1), whose (very) form is Love (and in Him) is no spot of anger. . . (He is) eternally in every place (G. *Akal Ustat*, 124, 164), whose

[1] *Jau ātama bhayā udāsu*, the connotation of *udāsu* is almost "disillusioned or disgusted" with worldly things, and so "withdrawn" into spirituality

[2] Nanak everywhere insists that Realisation can come only by the grace of the Guru, who is God manifesting to the devotee.

body is all things (of the universe)[1] . . . He, being separate, is (yet) immanent (in all)[2] (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 23. 6, 10: 4), Nanak, everything is God outspread[3] (Ar *Mundavani*, 1)!

2. Whom shall I call evil when there is naught but He (F *Sloka* 75)? I declare (that) no one seems bad (to me), (N. *Maru Ashtapadi*. 10. 8), (for) the One resides in the heart (of all) (N *Asa Patilikhi*, 13) In every heart of creatures born from eggs or wombs, from sweat or mud,[4] the Light is found (N. *Barah Maha*, 14), the Light in all of us takes many different colours (N *Asa*, 37: 4), (but) in every heart, at the inmost of all, there is only the One God (Nd *Asa*, 1: 4) Behold Him who is within outside as well, (for) there is no other besides, receiving the vision of oneness from the Guru's presence,[5] behold the Light

[1] We meet again the familiar thought that the universe is God's "body"

[2] A clear statement of the *visishthadvaita position*—distinct and yet not different

[3] *or* has emanated from God, *sabhu Nānak Brahama pasāro* Note that the word here used for "God" relates to the Absolute not to the Manifest and Personal

[4] *andaja, jeraja, setaja, utabhuja* the "four kingdoms" of living nature as represented by birds, mammals, lice and worms

[5] *guramukhi lit* from the mouth of the Guru, but often used simply for contact as when sitting in his presence or serving him

enshrined in every bosom (N. *Sorathi*, 11:1)! In the eyes of saintly folk all is God;[1] . . . (and) on beholding (that) vision all are entranced[2] (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 23.4)!

3. Wherever I look, there is Thy Light, Thy wondrous beauty (N. *Sorathi*, 4:1)! Within, without (is) God the One Lord[3] (R. *Suhi Chhant*, 2:2). I look with both eyes, but I see none but God; the eyes remain fixed in love (on Him), and now no (other) subject can be spoken of[4] (K. *Sorathi*, 4:1) (My) love is attached to that True One . . who, even if I separate (from Him) will not be separate (from me), being immanent in all (Ar. *Sri*, 13:1). All is God, all is God! There is nought but God (Nd *Asa*, 1:1)!

4. This world is the little chamber of the Real, wherein is the True One's dwelling (A *Asa di Var*, 2; Sl. 2) he who is absorbed

Asians have always held that association with a saint, even a distant sight of one, may be enough to clear the vision and enable swift realisation of God

[1] *Brahama*, here again the word for the Absolute

[2] It is not possible for the God-seer to see other things at that moment and his vision becomes wholly turned upon the One, so that to the world he seems asleep, or mad, or blind The senses are *still*.

[3] *antari bāhari Hari prabhu eko.*

[4] Cf GN 21·2, GH 41 5.

in love for the real Master (sees) the Inner Light and (hears) the Inner Word (N. *Sorathi Ashtapadi*, 1: 1). (O God,) though Thou art unseen Thy Light is seen (5: 316 G)!

When we detach our minds from the blinding egoism, we see that in all alike is only God, that this whole universe is but the curtain behind which He plays His shadow play, that in all we see and hear there is really nothing but He. Yet is this no vulgar pantheism, for God is not bound or limited by His creation, the Divine Actor does not forget His real Self for all the varied parts He may play in this wondrous drama. He assumes so many roles, disguises Himself in so many forms, and yet remains apart from all of them, transcendent as well as immanent in all.

Realising that all we see is really our Beloved playfully disguised, we shall no longer be able to condemn or criticise another—for he too is God, playing perhaps the villain's role in the drama, and how can there be interest in a drama if there be no villain to complicate the plot and so prolong the play?

God within the heart, God in all the universe outside! God everywhere at every moment! An ecstatic ocean of all-pervading bliss, nothing but perfect Love on every side! An ocean in which we, His little fishes, play and live our lives immersed in Him. He who sees thus can see no evil, can never turn his mind away from the One all-Good. Being the centre of each heart, never can that God be apart from any of His children, He is the eternal Companion, enlightening and gladdening all alike. This beatific vision is to be enjoyed not only by the sainted " dead ", but equally by those in this very world of ours whose eyes are opened by the grace of the true Teacher sent to those made ready by God's holy Will.

16. He is the Only Actor

1. Thyself the tablet, Thyself the pen, Thou (art) also the writing upon it (N. *Malai ki Vai*, 28 Sl 2) Thyself the fish, Thyself the net (N *Maru Solhe*, 1: 11), Thyself the fisherman and fish, Thyself the water and the net, . . Thyself the bait within it (N *Sri*, 25: 2)! Thyself (Thou art) the water, dry land, ocean and tank; . Thyself the cow, Thyself the herdsman, Thyself the Yogi and Thyself the enjoyer[1] (N *Maru Solhe*, 1: 6, 11, 12)! Speak of the One, O Nanak, why of a Second (N *Malai ki Vai*, 28 Sl 2)? He is Himself the maker of His own Play, of whose Play there is no limit (Ai *Sukhmani* 13· 8, 16: 3):

2 Girl friends, my Darling is Himself playful[2] in many ways (N *Sri*, 25· 3)! (Being) Himself the Actor, He makes (others) act (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 1: 4); as the Lord pleases, so He makes (them) dance . When one thinks· "Something has come through

[1] *āpe jogī āpe bhogī* the force lies, of course in the contrast between the renouncer who unites with God, and the hedonist who seeks Epicurean delights in worldly things

[2] *rangulā* suggesting the loving tricks of a playful child

me," then for him there can be no happiness; . . . **our** hands (can do) nothing at all (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 11: 7, 12: 4, 6: 8) To whatever (duty) Thou assignest (man), to that (he) must apply (himself) (Ar *Gauri*, 9: 4) Thou Thyself performest the whole play, Creator, why speak of (or) mention a second (A. *Majh ki Var*, 2 Sl.)?

3. At (His) will all come into being, at (His) will they carry out (their) work, at (His) will (man) comes into the power of Death,[1] at (His) will he is merged in the Real. Nanak, what pleases Him takes place; there is nothing at all in the power of creatures[2] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 4: 8), this is the (good) pleasure of the True One (N *Maru Solhe*, 15: 12) He Himself . beholds (His own) glory, the one whom He inspires serves the Guru (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 18: 7-8).

4 (Thy) Shadow overshadows in everything, (even) fancies[3] are Thy making; having

[1] *kālai vasi hit* into the power of time, fate, death

[2] *i e*, creatures have no power at all

[3] *bharamu*, *i e*, illusions, errors, superstition, vagary It should not be understood from this that God wilfully misleads or deceives His creatures, but that He permits them to wander into falsity so that they may in time perceive and love the truth The *ignorant* cannot gain wisdom, but even the world of illusion is His world

formed fancies, Thou Thyself leadest men astray, while those meet the Guru (on whom) Thy favour (falls) (N. *Asa Patilikhi*, 10). Thou who madest the day hast (also) made the night[1] (N. *Asa*, 2: 4); dying and living are in the hand of the Lord to whom I have given this heart (of mine) (N *Barah Maha*, 8). Demolishing thoroughly, (He then) uproots; (but) He is Himself the Adorner at (His) will (N *Alahania*, 1: 3). He does that which pleases Him (A *Asa di Var*, 24), and whatever He does, I consider well done (N *Asa*, 37· 1). He Himself does (it); to whom shall I complain? There is no one else (who) acts: go and complain to Him if anything goes wrong (N. *Suhi Chhant*, 4: 4)! But He knows all without (our) speaking (N. *Dhanasari*, 5: 1)

5. If ever He inspires (some) service, that will indeed be done; He does it, of whom (are we to) speak (N *Asa Ashtapadi*, 18: 7)? Thou art the Doer, I do nothing, when *I* act,

[1] God rules *all* things Nanak does not shrink from the logical consequences of this truth, even where it suggests to the careless that *all* includes evil As Julian of Norwich rightly said, "Evil is no thing" Darkness is but the absence of light, and evil the turning away from God Isaiah sang "I Yahveh made the light and darkness."

it comes to nothing[1] (N *Asa di Vai*, 12 Sl 1), (but when) Thou Thyself actest, that comes to pass (R *Asa Chhant*, 7. 3)

God is all, He is the slayer and the slain and the act of slaying, the author, pen, book, reader, characters and plot of the story There is nothing anywhere that is not He, that does not draw its very being from Him and exist solely by His will It is He who prompts the actors in this lovely world-Play of His, it is He who wrote the drama, it is He again who sits in the auditorium and enjoys the show We think ourselves so clever, we human beings, with our aeroplanes and submarines, our radio and our atom bombs—yet we are nothing at all, only shadows dancing at His will Only when we come to know this do we ourselves begin to enjoy the great Play, and then we realise His supreme Wisdom designed it all for our welfare He sends us into birth, guards us from the countless possible accidents which might destroy our bodies before we have played to the end of the part allotted to us, and when the last words are said, when the curtain slowly sinks over the fading scene of our earthly life, it is He who receives us and leads us home

When we know that all life's events, its joys and sorrows, its dear friendships and its bitter treacheries, are prompted, guided, worked out by that Divine hand—how can we be angry or hate, feel enmity or contempt? All are but His instruments, taken up one by one to work His perfect will Even our wanderings, our sins and failures, our despairs—are part of His design, planned that we may learn from the agony they cause that peace and happiness are in nought but Him, so that we may resolutely turn from all else to Him alone and so find unending bliss

[1] How true it is that what we think *we* do turns to ashes! Gandhiji believed he was liberating India from corruption

It is when we delude ourselves with thinking it is we who act, who earn merit, perform great vows, make pilgrimages, give charities, serve the nation—then it is that we, by thus enslaving ourselves to petty egoism, invite ruin on our ideals True victory can come only when it is God who acts through us, when we regard ourselves as His tools, passive to the workings of His will, from Him come all urges to noble action, and from Him alone comes its success

17. He Alone is True

1. *The first name is God's; how many Prophets (stand) at His gate*[1] (1. 123 N) ! *There are lakhs of Muhammeds, but only one God; the Unseen is true and free from care, (and) many Muhammeds stand in His Court, so numberless they cannot be counted* (1:121 N) ! How many saints and prophets beyond counting![2] they came into existence from the soil and were mixed with the soil again (G *Akal Ustat*, 77) The Teacher of teachers is one, many are the disguises (He assumes) (N *Asa Sohila*, 2: 1) *Prophets*

[1] Tradition says this was the Guru's reply to Sheikh Farid (II) when the Muslim saint invited him to honour the name of Muhammed

[2] Such sayings as this, current in the days of the Gurus inflamed the anger of orthodox Muslims who felt them disrespectful to their great Prophet But Muhammed himself said such things in the *Qur'ān* Great is the Prophet indeed but what is he before his Lord? How many worlds are there in God's universe, where His children live, to whom He must send His messengers from time to time! The words used are *pir au pikāmbara kete*

have come into the world when sent; whenever He pleases He has them seized and brought before Him (1: 121 N). Nothing is unmoving save the Name of God (AD. *Gujari ki Var*, 22 Sl 2)

2 Serve only the One, the very Divine Teacher of all,[1] know that His real nature[2] is only one, the One Light in all (G *Akal Ustat*, 85) He is, and (ever) shall be, (He) has not gone, nor will He go;[3] eternal is the Creator. Nanak, know (that) the Real is eternal, . everything else is false (N *Sri*, 28 3, 5: 1, 4) The whole world (is like) a dream drama,[4] (God) causes the whole play of the drama to be enacted (R *Kanre Ashtapadi*, 5 · 5)

3. What pleases Him, the Almighty, that indeed takes place, this world is an illusion (N *Alahania*, 1: 3), this world is all a dream[5]

[1] *eka hī kī seva sabha hī ko gurudevaeka*

[2] *sarūpa* In His true Self God is only One, yet He manifests as many

[3] A hard passage, the text reads *haibhī hosī jāi na jāsī*, it may mean, as M has it "He was not born, either shall He die," but it does not say so much

[4] "All the world's a stage" said Shakespeare also

[5] We must be careful not to exaggerate what the Guru says here and fall into the error of the *māyāvādin* The world *is* there, but "things are not what they seem", and looking at the real rope we take it for a snake

(Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 40). (Yet) everything is true to the one who understands, (for), Nanak, the Lord is altogether true [1] (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 17: 1). The whole world must pass away (in time), the Compassionate [2] is the only permanent Abode By day the sun moves, the moon moves by night, lakhs of stars pass by; He is the one perpetual Abode, O Nanak,—(this is) positively true (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 17: 6, 8), whose bliss-form is ever blessed (Ar *Sukhmani*, 16. 2).

Millions of saints and devotees, millions of prophets and messengers at His command—but only *one* Lord, only one who is eternally true. The greatest of men, even *avatāras*, appear in the world, do the work God gave to them, and vanish again at His call, He alone is real and everlasting, always omnipresent There is no wisdom, then, in adoring men, in raising saints and prophets to the thrones of our hearts where He alone has the right to sit The very greatest are just *nothing* before Him, it is not only foolishness, but blasphemy and treason, to exalt His servants to His place, they are but dreams that fade away in the first light of the real spiritual dawn The whole world is that—real to our eyes while we live in it, but fundamentally false

[1] The essence of perfect Truth Brahman, could not produce what is false the truthful does not lie or deceive God is real, so the universe that comes from Him must be real also—in a sense Its "reality" is relative and depends wholly on God's sustaining will

[2] *Rahīm*, one of the beautiful Names for God in the *Qur'ān*

because impermanent To rely on the fleeting, the unreliable, is the utmost folly, the eternal alone can be a strong support, the source of everlasting security and happiness He alone can be our real Home, who ever was, who is now, and evermore shall be, changeless and serene, resting in Him, we shall find Him in all, and so be at home in everything

18. All Nature Adores Him

1 Stars, moon and sun[1] meditate, earth sings and sky (Ar *Asa Chhant*, 5 3), the whole creation serves (Thee) day and night (Ar *Sri III*, 2· 12), (while) lakhs of devotees adore, repeating, "Beloved, Beloved (Ar *Asa*, 106· 1)!" God in the water, in the dry land God, God in the bosom, in the forest God, God here, God there, . God timeless, infinite God, God without disease, the griefless God, God without fancies, God without (the effects of) action, God invincible, God fearless, God undifferentiated, God without defect! (O God), Thou art indeed Space, indeed Thou art Time, Thou art the Occupant, Thou art indeed the Place (as well); . Thou in truth art Thou, Thou,

[1] *nakhiatra sasī ara sūra*

Thou; Thou in truth art Thou, Thou, Thou [1] (G. *Akal Ustat*, 51-69)!

2. In the sky (is Thy) paten,[2] the sun and moon are turned to lamps,[3] the circle of stars are the inlaid [4] pearls; the fragrance of sandal-wood (is Thy) incense, the wind (Thy) chowrie-fan, [5] all the forest flowers for the King of Light [6] (N. *Dhanasari Sohila*, 3: 1)!

3 What an *ārati* [7] is this, O Ender of births and deaths,[8] Thy *ārati*! The music of the uncaused sound [9] is (Thy) blowing of

[1] Another typical piece of the Tenth Guru's style, in the original, it begins: *jale Harī thale Harī, ure Harī bane Harī*, and ends in a shout of ecstasy, untranslatable in English *tuhī tuhī tuhī tuhī, tuhī tuhī tuhī tuhī*

[2] *thālu*, the silver plate in which offerings are made to God during Hindu worship, I have used the word *paten* to convey the religious sense

[3] *dīpakabane*

[4] *i e* inlaid in the plate

[5] *pavanu cavaro kare*, the chowrie is a "fly-whisk" of peacock-feathers, or other soft material, constantly kept waving over the head of a King or of the Divine images Sikhs use it over the Book while reading their *Guru Granth Sahib*

[6] *or* is flowering with light for the King

[7] *ārati*, the worship of God through an image, with blowing of conches, ringing of bells, waving of lights, and public adorations There is no exact English equivalent

[8] *bhava-khandanā*, a name for the Redeemer of man from the woes of repeated entry into this world of birth and death

[9] *anāhatā*, the mystic sound heard in the heart-*cakra* when the soul draws near to spiritual illumination Materialists explain it as the "beating of the heart", which explains nothing of its description in the scriptures or experience

horns A thousand[1] eyes are Thine, and yet Thou hast no eyes, a thousand forms, yet not one is Thine, a thousand holy feet, (and) yet not one foot, without an organ of smell, a thousand organs of smell are Thine! I am fascinated by this play (N *Dhanasari Sohila*, 3: 2)!

4 The light in all is this very Light (of Thine), through whose radiance there is a brightness in everything, the Light has shone forth in the Guru's witness! What pleases **God**, that is the (real) *ārati* (Like) a bee maddened with desire for the flower, (so) day and night (my) heart becomes entranced with thirst for God's feet! Give the water of grace to the *sāringa*[2] Nanak, so that he may dwell in Thy Name (N *Dhanasari Sohila*, 3: 3-4)![3]

When the entire universe adores God and glorifies Him by its unquestioning obedience to His laws, how

[1] The word is quite vague, meaning an indefinite large number

[2] The bird *cuculus melanoleukos*, which is said to drink water only when the moon is in Arcturus and to sing at night before the rains commence On hearing it love's wounds "bleed again" and the lover longs for the beloved It is another name for the *chatrik* of GGS 7 3.

[3] These three paragraphs form the song of Guru Nanak when invited to take part in the *ārati*-ceremony at the temple of Sri Jagannath (Krishna) at Puri

small it seems for us to try to worship Him in temples with our lights and flowers, with curling wisps of incense smoke and muttered prayers! God is everywhere, to be adored in every place, in every form; how can we be separate from Him even enough so as to worship Him, as outside ourselves (*cf* GH 24)? The whole of Nature is His temple, the stars His altar lights, the soft forest odours are the incense ceaselessly offered Him, the wind-waved branches are the royal fan above Him, the "voice of the silence" mystically heard in each heart is the uplifted chant of adoration. Everywhere is He, in everything adoring and adored, Himself the Object of His own worship, truly served only by the doing of His holy will. What a God is this of ours, my brothers! Who but is lost in wondering love at the very thought of Him!

CHAPTER THREE

MORTAL MAN

Though destined for immortal bliss, by the delusive pleasures of the world the soul of man is trapped in the false belief that the body is his self, its wants his needs—and so forgets the Lord in whom is all his good Clinging to the perishable things of the world, he shares their fate and is subject to mortality (*cf* GH 3 4), the victim of sin, and so dragged again and again into physical birth by his own deluded choice This must go on until by God's grace the Guru awakens in him the purifying love for God which destroys his egoism and sets him free from all illusion Bodily death is common to all who take the body, but it cannot affect God's lovers, who dwell not therein but in His feet, spending their lives in continuous memory of Him and self-identification with His will

19. This World is False

1 The mortal round world[1] was created like a house of sand (Ar. *Bilawal*, 31: 1): what is seen must all perish like the shadow of a cloud (T. *Gauri*, 2: 2), so (one should

[1] *mrita maṇdala jagu*

think continually of the Unseen (K *Bawan Akhari*, 24). Taking as real a body false as a dream of the night (T. *Gauri*, 2: 1), O man, why do you pamper the body? It will vanish like a cloud of smoke. Worship God, the One Friend (Ar. *Sorathi*, 4: 2). (He who) in his soul takes the world for real shall not meet the Beautiful even in a dream (K. *Gauri*, 23: 2); the disciple sees and remembers the truth (that) save for the Reality (within it) the world is impermanent (N. *Dakhni Oamkaru*, 2: 4). O heart, worship God and give up imagination;[1] God is the Life of the world. . . . (so) do service to God within the heart (K. *Bilawal*, 10: 1, 3).

2. This world is all (mere) water, from water alone everything has come[2] (AD *Malar ki Var*, 11 Sl. 2) Between fire and drops of water we came into being; for what purpose (did we) obtain existence? For how long (have we) a mother, how long a father? From whence have we really come (N. *Gauri*, 17: 1)? With whom (should we) make

[1] or, illusion, superstition, and the like (*bhāramu*).

[2] A revival of the old Greek doctrines of Thales (B C 640-550), but of course the idea goes back to ages beyond him, to the Vedas and elsewhere

friendship?[1] The whole world is fleeting (N *Asa di Var*, 10 Sl 1)! Through how many ages this mind[2] has wandered! It does not finally remain (anywhere) but comes and goes When God wills, then He causes the wanderings—He creates the play of the universe[3] (AD *Gujari ki Var*, 13 Sl 2)! Those who have not met the personal true Guru are unfortunate and in the power of time,[4] again and again they wander into the womb and are placed in appalling filth (R *Sri*, 2 3) Living creatures are all Thy play (R *Asa*, 1 2); all the Play is Thine, O Lord (R *Gauri*, 12 4)!

This body, part of a perishable world made of unstable materials subject to incessant change, is wholly unreal—if by "real" we mean, with all Asians, "eternal" All save God is fleeting, unreliable, so it is wise to attach the heart to Him alone, turning it away from this fickle world Those who set their heart on earthly things are doomed to disappointment, to constant misery, never can they hope to see God while looking away from Him Only they who devote themselves to Him

[1] These rhetorical questions rather recall the style of Zarathushtra in the Gathas (cf GZ 66-68),

[2] The word used here is *manu*, mind or heart, note that the wanderings are "in" the *mind*, they are in a sense therefore fictional, as taught in the Advaita

[3] *parapancu*

[4] *kāla*, time, death, fate

can know the exquisite joy His service infallibly affords

World and body alike derive from "water", the most unstable of the "elements" (cf. *Gen* 1 2, GH 16: 2, GI 14 1), our earthly relationships are momentary and of little meaning—for our real relationship is with God, and that is Religion For ages and ages through birth after birth of wandering, the soul has sought for happiness in this welter of human things, never realising that real joy can be found only in the One Source of Bliss Himself—until at last the true Teacher comes to him, and the long search is ended in the rapturous vision of the Beloved Lord It is He who in His wisdom caused that sad wandering, so that the restless longing might grow to fever heat, until the soul could melt and dissolve in its love for Him

20. Sin

1. The pleasure of gold, the pleasure of silver, the pleasure of women and the scent of perfume, the pleasure of horses, the pleasure of the couch and palace, the pleasure of sweets, and the pleasure of meat! Such (being) the pleasures of the body, how can the Name (find) a dwelling in the heart?[1] (N. *Sri*, 4: 2)? The false one is by (his) affections attached to the false,[2] forgetting the Creator (N *Asa di Var*, 10 Sl 1)! All the senses are intoxicated

[1] strictly bosom (*ghati*)

[2] *kūṛ kūṛai nehu lāgā*. Like attracts like.

with their own pleasures and feel no interest (even) in their house[1] (Ar. *Gauri*, 20: 2)!

2 The Bridegroom gave me these things, and on them I fixed (my) mind; . in these luxuries I forgot (my) Spouse and did not sit near Him . O Husband, I withdrew from Thee, and so stored up misery (for myself)[2] (N *Suhi Kuchaji*, 1· 8-14)! God, graciously pardon me, (for) I am a sinner very full of guilt (AD *Sloka* 29: 2)! By (my) not obeying (His) Command, even though (God) is within the house He **seems** far away (AD. *Gujari ki Var*. 6 Sl 1). But even if I have gone astray (I am) a child, O God, and Thou (art my) father and mother (Ar *Sri*, 27· 1)! In the True Master are all virtues, (but) all demerits (are) in us (N *Sri*, 10. 1); we commit many sins, no end of them (AD *Sloka* 29: 1)! (yet) if **we** let God's feet dwell in the heart (our) transgressions shall be blotted out (AD. *Gujari*, 6: 2).

3 Through ignorance is man involved in worldliness; if he knew he would save himself

[1] *i e*, the welfare of the body itself, in which they dwell, is neglected

[2] Habitual disobedience to God destroys the intimacy wherewith He may be constantly preceived as present, it alienates the soul from all good

(from it)[1] (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 11·3). (Now) are my faults as overflowing as the waters of the sea and ocean; . . . my defects cannot be counted (N *Gauri*, 17·5, 1) When there is impurity in the heart and impurity in the body, the tongue must also be unclean; . . how can it be made pure?[2] Without the heart the word cannot be cleansed—truth arises from the true[2] (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 5: 1). If one freely sings (God's) glory day and night, all one's offences are erased (AD. *Suhi Ghhant*, 1: 3) (but) if he forgets the Real for one instant that time goes in vain; with every breath he (must) remember (God),[3] and (then) He Himself gladly pardons him (AD *Gujari Ashtapadi*, 1: 9). Intoxicated with God's presence, he becomes pure (Ar. *Gauri*, 109: 4).

4. Cleave to God the Treasure, worship the true Guru, leave all wickedness; (Ar. *Sri*, 25: 1);

[1] *anajānata bikhīa mahi racai*: "They know not what they do!" cried Jesus as His torturers drove in the nails Knowing God, how could one sin against Him?

[2] "By their fruits ye shall know them" One with a pure heart has pure thoughts and utters pure words how can the words be pure when the heart is full of foulness and every filth? Only contact with purity can purify, as the magnet magnetises all the steel it touches

[3] Cf GN 16 6 etc It is impossible to point out in detail the parallels between these two "Gospels", they are so close that they may be regarded as one, in two forms, Sikhism is indeed a Vaishnavism purged of "image-worship" and "caste"

through devotion get rid of the (petty) self; . . such a man becomes pure (AD. *Basantu*, 5: 1-2). Having seen the vision (of God) **he** becomes holy and uplifts all brothers and friends (Ar. *Majh*, 16· 2) O Nanak. (then) falsehood is ended, truth at last prevails[1] (N *Ramkali ki Var*, 13 Sl 2)!

The pleasures of the world for a time distract the seeking soul from its agelong quest and prevent it from the passionate search within which would unveil the Hidden One in each heart So all-absorbing are these worldly delights, worthless though they be, that they leave the soul no time to think of its own needs, the senses are so busy tasting them that they forget their very function is really to set God on the throne within the soul

So the soul forgets God, intoxicates herself with pleasures that turn to misery—ashes in a mouth that thought to relish sweets By turning to Him with a cry for pardon and a humble admission that the agony of separation from all that is good is caused by her own fault, the soul invokes His aid, pleading for God's paternal love to replace her own sins with His infinite virtues. It is only this attraction to the world of sense which plunges man in sin—and that comes from ignorance, so its cure is knowledge, the knowledge that God is all and God is Love Only His entry into the heart, in the manifested form of the Divine Name, can take all sins away and make it in a moment wholly pure, plunging it into a sea of entrancing bliss

One who would be free from sin must cling to God, obey the Teacher sent to him, and through his devotion

[1] Almost verbally the same as in GI 34. 3 (*Qur'ān*, 34 49).

transcend the egoistic self, then "the pure in heart shall see God", and such a one saves himself and all in contact with him too.

21. Bondage and Liberation

1 In many forms this world has bewitched (men) in many ways (Ar. *Sri*, 21:4); by imagining an illusory[1] body to be real, in this way is the self bound (T. *Sarang*, 3:2); those who practise falsehood and deceit (fall) into birth in the world (Ar. *Asa Chhant*, 13:3). This soul has dwelt in many wombs;[2] being plunged into a sweet fascination, it was trapped in the womb.[3] This *māyā* has brought the three worlds into its power and set its lure in every bosom (Ar *Bawan Akhari*, 7). (Brother,) you are clinging closely to the unreal; . . . desire, anger, greed and illusion[4] —to these pleasures the senses cling. . . . So

[1] *mithiā*, the same word as is used in the famous Advaita dictum *brahmasatyam jaganmithya*

[2] *garbh*, the Skt. *garbham*

[3] *joni*, the Skt *yoni*; in English it is difficult nicely to distinguish these two words for womb.

[4] *kāma krodha aru lobha moha;* the usual four in Skt works, they are not pleasures to *us*, but the "senses" (or may we say the "physical elemental"?) finds great pleasure in the excitement they provide (cf C W Leadbeater's books)

the (Divine) Person the Creator[1] has caused you to wander again and again into birth (Ar *Asa*, 126 1, 3)

2 Accursed be (thıs) love for the lure of wordliness, no one (who has it) is seen (to be) happy (Ar *Srı*, 13 1)! The Creator takes to Hımself no blame (for this)[2] (N *Asa*, 39: 1) Bound by the fetters of his own "I—I", the blınd one ımputes blame to others (for his misery) (Ar *Bawan Akharı*, 2) When this one thınks anybody bad, then all join in a plot agaınst hım, when he ceases (to say)· "Mıne, thine," then they no longer feel enmity for hım[3] He who attaches himself to God ıs the friend of all (Ar *Gaurı*, *Ashtapadı*, 1· 2, 6: 1)

3 The world is pervaded with the intoxıcation of desıre, anger and egoısm, (Ar *Srı*, 25: 2); the heart's ınfatuation ıncreases (the trend to) birth and death (Ar *Bawan Akharı*, 2), (and thereby the soul) has (only) receıved the fruits (of ıts own acts) recorded ın the past

[1] *Bıdhāte*, Skt *Vıdhāta*, ı e Brahma the Creator

[2] *āpe dosu na deī, kartā*, no sorrow can be caused by God, but He allows man to suffer the unhappy results of foolıshness, so that he may become wıse (cf GH 31 1)

[3] Thıs teachıng ıs very typıcal of that of modern Theosophısts

(N *Sri Ashtapadi III*, 1·8) When such (men) entangle themselves in the infatuation (of worldliness), coming and going[1] (in the world) they are always sought by Death (Ar. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 1:4); bound by Death's rope and the love of sweet worldliness, deluded by error, they do not realise that the Lord is always with them (Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 9). When a man harbours pride in the heart, then he madly roams about away (from God); (but) when he has become the dust of all (feet), then in every bosom he perceives the delightful Lord (Ar *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 1: 1).

4. The service of the Lord (Ar *Sukhmani*, 19. 4) and the service of a good man breaks the bondage of birth and death,[2] and one attains to happiness . He takes the name of the One and strings it in his heart,[3] and (then) he will not be swept again into birth.

[1] *āvai jāi*, the usual phrase for rebirth in the physical world—which is a doctrine fundamental to Sikhs as to Hindus of almost every school

[2] The power of service done to a saint with a pure heart is also fundamental to Sikh doctrine, the saint's grace is the channel of God's grace, and this instantly frees the faithful soul from bondage The personal lives of the Second and Third Gurus specially proved this truth

[3] *i e* lets the heart hang on the Name, as a bead upon the thread of the *mālā* or rosary When the Name pierces and supports the heart, it lies at the centre of the man's life and he is merged into its bliss

Nanak, the coming and going is at an end for him in whose heart is (God) (Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 27 Sl , 14, 7 Sl). When from him all errors have been destroyed, there is no difference (in him) from the Supreme God (Ar *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 1:4) The errors are cut away by the Guru, (and then) all is considered God (Ar *Sri*, 25·4)! He who is given to love interiorly is a liberated (soul) (AD *Majh Ashtapadi*, 20. 7); when he recognises the Creator, then for him there is no more burning (of desire)[1] (Ar *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 1. 3)

5 Graciously unite (with those), O God, separated (from Thee) by past deeds; wearied by wandering in the four quarters and ten directions,[2] they have (now) come for the kind welcome of the Lord (Ar *Barah Maha*, 1)! Mother, father, son, brother, friend, there is none but He, He fulfils the heart's desire (of one who) repeats (the Name of) the Sea of Happiness[3] (R *Kanre ki Var*, 13-14)

[1] *i e*, of the pain of separation from God, source of all good

[2] the four cardinal points, East, North, etc the four intermediary points, North-East, South-West, etc , upwards and downwards

[3] *sukha-sāgaru* familiar name for God throughout India

It is by fancying the reality of this changeful body of his that man is caught up in the toils of worldliness, which are so alluring and so crafty that few can escape its snare Caught in its beauty, the soul passes age after age in physical bodies, being deceived into the belief of their essentiality so that almost without question she yields to all the demands of sense and passion So long as these prevail in the heart, man lies chained by *māyā*, and cannot escape from rebirth

Now in this slavery there can be no real happiness, for man is meant to be free This is the fault of no one but the silly soul herself, though she tries to throw the blame for her sorrows on others, even on God Himself—but in vain Indeed, so long as she attributes her woes to others, she brings down their cruelties and injustices on her own head and surrounds herself with enemies When she renounces the petty self which has caused all the trouble, she is at once free and finds in all the world a friend

So long as the soul is subject to the passions and desires of earthly things, so long must she fall into earthly bodies and endure the sorrows of the unstable and unsatisfactory life down here, which have already been earned by earlier actions and desires It is the proud belief that one acts on one's own which has entangled her in this snare, and it is only the humility which sees God as the inspirer and doer of every action which frees her for ever and shows her God enthroned in every being everywhere.

This humility arises from the contact with a saint of God; it grows from the act of surrender to Him, which is symbolised and manifested by prayer and repeating the holy Name When God takes the throne —rebirth, sin, pride, egoism for ever vanish, the barrier between Creator and creature disappears, and the "light is merged with Light". In this union alone lies peace, full satisfaction of the heart's long desire for

happiness, the soul enters into God and knows Him as in real essence not other than herself

22. Death

1 The world is a perishable home—(my) heart has known (this) truth[1] (N *Tilang*, 1: 1); everything that comes into the world must depart again, (all) but the Name is under (the control of) Time[2] (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 16. 4) Like the guest of a night you will arise and go away at dawn,[3] (my brother), why are you attached to the family? All are garden flowers[4] (Ar *Sri*, 22 2)! As many as (there are) souls, so many are wayfarers, when the summons comes there can be no delay (N *Ramkali ki Var*, 11 Sl 2).

2 When (God) sends (a man) he comes (into the world), he goes when recalled[5] (N *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 7. 10); leaving in the

[1] *duniā mukāme phānī tahkika dila dānī* which is Arabicised Urdu We find a good deal by the First Guru in this dialect, for he mixed much with Muslims, to whom he spoke in their own tongue

[2] *or* · Death (*kāla*).

[3] This metaphor of the night's visitor at an inn, who packs up and goes early in the morning, is a favourite one among Muslims of all lands, as it was with the Manicheans long before

[4] We blossom for a day or two, fade, and fall

[5] So Prof Jodh Singh.

world (his) raiment[1] and pleasant beauty, he must go (N. *Asa di Var*, 14); he came naked, and naked he will go[2] (Ar. *Asa*, 38: 3) No one brought this wealth when he came (here), no one will take it when he goes (*K. Sarang*, 1. 2); save only for God's Name (all) will be lost in the future.[3] (Ar. *Barah Maha*, 3)

3 Why is the foolish mind proud? It will have to depart when the Master wills, . . (it will have) to leave the house, for none can remain (here) (N *Maru*, 2: 1-2), and that day has drawn very near (for you) (Ar *Sri*, 22: 4). You weep for others, but who (will) weep for you? . They (will) not at all hear, (though) you would make people hear (your cries). O Nanak, the One who made them sleep awakens them; if you realise your (real) home, then there will be no (more) sleep (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 13. 3-5)

4 Those who wander from the Supreme Lord are filled with every disease (Ar. *Barah*

[1] *i e* body—a metaphor derived from Gnostic and Hermetic usage through Persian literature, as much as through the Hindu tradition (cf *Gita*, 2 22). The parallels between the *Granth Sahib* and the *Gita* are too numerous to indicate, their writers moved in the same tide of inspiration

[2] Cf *Tim* 6 7

[3] *agai*, *i e*, after death on the road to judgment

Maha, 9); forgetting God, **they are** already dead (Ar *Asa*, 149 1), (for) Death seizes on him who has become an unbeliever [1] in the Lord; not perceiving the Blissful Self,[2] he will be born and die in many wombs (Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 21)

5. The fish did not understand the net (spread) in the unfathomed briny lake, like (that) fish, so the net will fall unawares on man The whole world is bound by Death; without a Guru Death is invincible,[3] but those escape (who are) imbued with the Real, having left doubt and wicked desires[4] (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 4· 1) (So) give up (mere) pleasure, and spontaneous happiness [5] will come (N. *Maru*, 2. 2)

6 When the body falls and the soul leaps away, what will be the state of evildoers (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 16. 4)? Azrail [6] grabs (me) by

[1] *sākata*, Skt *Śākta*, worshipper of *Śakti*, power, it is curious how this word came to mean in Punjabi almost "atheist" The absence of God *is* death

[2] *ātmarām*

[3] *or* Death swallows all but the Guru

[4] *vikāra*, *i e*, *vāsanā*, *doṣa*, guilt, evil traces of desire

[5] *sahaja sukhu*, *sahaja* means "easy", natural unopposed, habitual, etc.

[6] The Muslim name for the Angel of Death

my hair,[1] yet my heart does not know (it); (there is) no wife, son, father, brother to take my hand [2]—no one (to stop) me falling when at last my (hour of) fate arrives (N. *Tilang*, 1: 1-2). (Yet) if one takes care not to forget the Master, then it is easy to die, [3] . . Nanak, he who dies such a death shall live for ever (AD *Bihagale ki Var*, 17 Sl 2)!

All earthly things are fleeting and doomed to perish, all friendships and relationships last but for a little and when Death calls, the soul must at once leave them all behind All its cleverness and learning, all its bodily beauty and strength, its wealth and courtliness, its noble ancestry, its lands and houses, proud balances in the bank—all remain behind and pass into other hands, the soul must enter the unseen as naked as it came into the world at birth One thing alone remains. the Name of God—that is, as much of Him as the soul has been able to perceive in life

Death is always on the doorstep for each one of us, and it becomes us to think how much of that precious Name is really treasured in our heart, so that we may not go altogether empty to that world beyond Those who profess love for us here will soon forget us when we die, only one Friend is ever constant, and in Him alone can we find a real and eternal home

[1] *lit* shame, to be pulled by the hair or beard is an unspeakable disgrace, but Death pays no heed to the dignity of men

[2] *i e*, as a helper (*dastangīr*), this passage is in almost pure Persian

[3] That death is a joy to the believer who " falls asleep in the Lord " has been proved a thousand times in every religion.

Not the death of the body is to be feared, but the greater death, which is forgetting of the Lord (*cf* GH 28) and which dips us again and again in the hell of earthly wombs Forgetfulness of the Real is the snare which catches us and hands us over to Death, leaving aside all evil and worldliness, filling the heart with the nectar of God, we shall find Life Eternal is our birthright that none can take from us One whose body dies while his soul and mind and heart dwell in the Lord of Life will certainly find death but the gate to eternal life and joy

23. Judgment

1 The Master,[1] seated in judgment with (His) book, will call for the reckoning (N. *Ramkali ki Var*, 13 Sl 2); of every moment[2] He will take an account, the soul will get bad and good (returns) (N *Tukhari Chhant*, 2: 5); what she has earned here, that she must receive yonder (AD *Bihagale ki Var*, 19 Sl 1), each must get the very same bad and good that she herself has done (N *Asa di Var*, 14). In the next (world) no authority avails, everyone fares according to his deeds[3] (N *Alahania*, 1: 2); he may have done (his own) will to (his) heart's content (down here), (but) in the

[1] *rabu*, the Arabic word *Rabb*, that is, God

[2] *ghaṛi*, strictly the short space of 24 minutes

[3] *agai hukamu na calai mūle siri siri kiā vihāna*

future he must walk on the narrow road[1] (N *Asa di Var*, 14), (and there) he is judged just exactly according to the work he has done (N. *Suhi*, 7: 3)

2. The work of all creatures is written on (their) head,[2] and the judgment will (depend) upon their actions (N. *Basantu*, 3: 4). Without (good) action[3] no one can pass (the test)[4] (N. *Ramkali ki Var*, 11 Sl 2), (and) no one can blot out the written record[5] (Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 17). As he sows, so he eats (R. *Asa*, 2: 5) God ever watches and hears everything, nothing can ever be hidden from Him (R. *Gauri ki Var*, 16 Sl 1) From whom do you try to hide, when He is always present watching (Ar. *Sri*, 16. 3)? Misled by error you keep

[1] The "narrow road" is described also in Muslim and Parsi books, often as being narrow as a razor's edge (cf GZ 41 1)

[2] This looks like fatalism, but such is not the meaning of the law of *karma* at all, fate has nothing to do with it for each makes his own *karma* and then reaps the effects of what he has made He can change it as soon as he wishes

[3] This reminds us that mere pious dreaming is not enough there must be virtuous *action* in the world to earn the grace of the Guru, which alone can give true piety and so lead to enlightenment and spiritual freedom

[4] The word is *tarai*, *i e*, "be saved"

[5] The terror of the judgment is mitigated by the assurance that the Judge knows also all compensating circumstances and, in weighing up our failures, considers also our difficulties and the efforts we made to overcome them

a curtain, but will (have to) confess the secrets of the soul;[a] . . how can you hide from Him (Ar Asa, 128: 1, 42: 3)?

God, who dwells as the conscience in each heart (*antarajāmi*), judges every soul after death, taking account of every action, thought, feeling and desire, and giving an exact return for all In that life we find the perfect fulfilment of our life down here, all incomplete plans are worked out, all sins meet their unpleasant consequences, all deeds of merit bring their own happy fruits There is absolute justice in that judgment, there is no partiality, no favouritism, each receives exactly as he gave, by the infallible and inevasible law of *karma* No matter how much a rich or powerful man on earth may have escaped the fruits of his deeds here, there in that life which follows he finds them awaiting him and there is no road for his escape Nor can he hope that his secret lusts and hates are unknown to that dreadful judge, for He is omniscient, and the stern words of sentence ring out like thunder on his startled ears as he staggers away to his punishment

We meet here the same kind of metaphorical picture of judgment as we found in GI 49 etc , GH 28, GZ 38, GMC 48-49, the tradition goes right back to the "weighing of souls" in the Egypt of B C 1500 along one line Banno's *Granth Saheb*, which is regarded as apocryphal by orthodox Sikhs, gives us many lurid extra details which bear resemblance to the descriptions of hell in various scriptures, but as these can no longer awaken respect in the minds of readers, we shall not print them here They are translated in part in Macauliffe's Vol I, pp 124-127

[a] *bhrama ke mūse tūm rākhata paradā pacai jīa ki mānī*

24. Hell and Rebirth

1 What is the use of bathing in holy waters (if) the filth of pride (remains) in the heart[1] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 12:4)? He who feels no love for the Name in (his) heart will go to Hell even if he perform crores of ceremonies. . . He who does not adore in the heart God's Name shall be bound in Death's city in the manner of a robber[2] (Ar. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 10:5-6); he asks for happiness but misery will come hereafter (K *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 1:1). Him who slanders (another here) . . . there (Death) seizes and throws into a terrible hell—a pit of misery is that (R *Gauri ki Var*, 16 Sl 1)! Those who forget my Master, for them (there is) extreme pain (N *Sorathi*, 1:1); the haughty in mind who have still something left (to pay),[3] over them Azrail will be placed in charge, and they will see no way to come or go, (being) trapped

[1] This is a frequent refrain of the Guru, who saw the Hindus of his time putting almost all their faith in such external rites.

[2] *cora kī nyāī Jama-puri bādhā* The name is more familiar in its Skt form of Yama

[3] *talbā pausan ākiā bākī jinā rahī* This passage seems to suggest an idea akin to the Catholic Purgatory and the Parsi Hamastakan (GZ 50 1, 46 7-8)

in the narrow street (N. *Ramkalı ki Var*, 13 Sl. 2).

2. One utters nectar in the mouth (while) poison (lurks) ın the heart, he undergoes a beating[1] whıle bound ın Death's city; (another) commıts sıns behind many curtains, ın a moment he ıs exposed to the world Ar. *Gaurı*, 71: 2-3) The habıtual slanderer[2] (becomes) a dweller ın Hell and is separated from the Inner Self,[3] (N *Maru Ashtapadı*, 7.3), naked ıs he sent to Hell, and then it seems very terrıble (to hım) and he repents of the sins he has committed[4] (N *Asa dı Var*, 14), Nanak, (he has) as many chaıns on the neck as sins, ıf he (acquıres) vırtue his chains ..

[1] Let us not be mısled by these metaphors ınto crude ımagınatıons about lıfe ın the spırıt-worlds Swedenborg's account of condıtıons found there, confirmed by later research, shows that the Guru here descrıbes what he actually *saw*, ın the only words whıch could convey anythıng clear and definıte to hıs audıence

[2] *nındā karı karı* lıt "slander makıng (and) makıng", a common ıdıom for contınuous actıon

[3] A strıkıng thought, agreeıng wıth the doctrıne that Hell ıs the separatıon from God, combıned wıth despaır

[4] The Catholıc dogma that repentance ıs ımpossıble ın Hell ıs contrary both to commonsense and to the defined nature of God What, then, ıs the *soul* subject to tıme, so that after death ıts whole powers and nature are changed and ıt loses both free-wıll and moral lıfe? Then the soul ıs *dead* along wıth the body And no thınkıng person can belıeve that God, who ın all worthy creeds ıs defined as Absolute Love, could create souls for *eternal* sufferıng A wıcked blasphemy

are cut off (N *Sorathi*, 1: 4). What happiness (can there be) for the one without virtue (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 5 · 1)? Nanak, the Creator is gracious to him who is drunk with the sweetness in the True Name within (Ar. *Gauri*, 71 · 4).

3 (Man) reaps the (fruits of) acts performed in a past (birth); the happiness and woe Thou givest to every individual is just, (O God) (N *Barah Maha*, 1)! As he made a sowing in the past (life), so he reaps (now) (R *Gauri ki Var*, 16 Sl. 1). Impute no blame to anyone, (my brother,) the blame (belongs) to your own *karma*; say, "What I have done, that have I suffered (now)! I give no blame to another person[1] (N. *Asa Patlikhi*, 21)!"

No ceremonies can cleanse a heart, nothing but the love of God can avail for that. The only way, therefore, to escape from Hell and rebirth in this unsatisfactory world is found in "the practice of the presence of God", feeling Him always within and without, around and permeating every atom of the soul's life Sin inevitably leads to Hell and to the misery of another incarnation: the forgetting of God, worst of all sins and intensified by the harbouring of egoism in the heart, puts the unhappy soul in the clutches of merciless Death, from whose "realm" he can find no escape

[1] What joy for the believer in *Karma*, it makes life sensible and puts it in our own control!

Useless then are the elaborate pretences of piety so cleverly kept up by sinners in this life, in the beyond all veils drop away, all curtains fall, and each soul stands naked as he really is before all mankind—glorious with the assumed merits of the Lord, conferred as an act of pure grace, or foul and stinking with the loathsomeness of sin which drags him down to its own home in Hell There he must repent at leisure amid frightful torments which exactly correspond to his sins and are their precise results

So too in the past Before this present birth, each has lived many times and earned merit or shame by his actions, according to these earnings of the past, so are his opportunities, talents and circumstances today All is absolutely just, for each has exactly what he has deserved and lies on the bed he himself has made for his own use

25. The Conquest of Death

1 Madmen, you remain asleep! drunk with the pleasure of worldliness, family and sense objects, you embrace fleeting delights [1] (Ar. *Asa*, 142· 1); while (a man) sleeps in sin and worldliness,[2] no perception or understanding comes (to him), when Death seizes (his) hair and lifts (him) up, only then does he go home [3]

[1] Cf the apostrophe in GH 8 2, the language here is striking, it reads *bāvara soi rahe, moha kutamba bikhai rasa māte mithiā gahana gahe*

[2] *māyā*

[3] *i e*, according to M, "come to his senses" God is the real home The same idea is common to Gnostics and Manicheans

(Ar. *Asa*, 152: 1). (Now) he rises eagerly for (some) bad work, but at the time for (repeating) the Name (he) lies sleeping (Ar. *Suhi*, 8: 1)!

2. From what an origin has this Thy mighty power made man! (Ar. *Sarang*, 81: 1); (and yet) the body (is) a temple[1] (P. *Dhanasari*). (My brother,) keep far from passion and guilt, (Ar. *Suhi Chhant*, 11: 3), press to (your) bosom (God's) lotus feet (resting) in the heart (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 19: 1), (for) there is no impurity for those who in the heart think of God, (K. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 41: 3), who fashioned you, (and) made the earthly body, (who is) the aforesaid Light bringing thought and discrimination, who protected you in the mother's womb—remember (that) Protector, O man (Ar. *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 2: 1)!

3. What comes into being is destroyed by death; (but) God has preserved us by (our) study of the Guru's word . . Death cannot trace out the one in (whose) heart God's true Name dwells and (who) sings (His) glory (N. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 14: 1, 9) On meeting

[1] *devāla*, i e, "house of God", an idea current among Christians first, so far as I have read

such devotees, man Nanak,[1] what can Death do to them (N *Ramkali*, 4. 4)? Nothing can injure the one whom (God) has caused to love Him[2] (AD *Anand*, 28: 3), (while) if anyone is very egoistic, he is mixed with the dust in a moment (Ar *Gond*, 20: 3). As a fish perishes without water, so does the unbeliever die of thirst . . . without God (N *Sorathi*, 7: 1) (O God), Thou (art) the ocean of water, we Thy fishes! (Ar *Majh*, 14: 1)!

4. O dear one, enjoy (God's) love while youth is (still) fresh, the days (of youth) are few (N *Sri*, 24: 1), the home is a whirl of entanglements, brother, and the stone of sin (can)not go (across it); embark the soul on the raft of the fear (of God) (N *Maru*, 2: 4), (for) in whose heart fear (is) in their heart (is also) love (N *Asa di Var*, 5 Sl 2) When it pleases **God**, then (man) feels love,[3] the deception of error departs from within (him),

[1] *jana Nānak*, the word *jana* means "person", then "man" in the sense of "slave" or "servant", and finally "man of God"

[2] We recognise the confidence of St Paul here (cf *Rom* 8 28)

[3] *bhāu*, i e, felt or emotional love, to be clearly distinguished from *liva*, or *prema*, which may have little of the emotions in it but acts as a goad to heroic action Western mystics also stress that one need not *feel* the love for God in order that it may be real, and sanctifying

wisdom spontaneously arises, and intelligence awakens, by the Guru's grace he then experiences (real) love.[1] In such a companionship (with God there is) no dying, recognise (His) will, and then (you) must meet the Master (K *Sri*, 1: 3-4)

5 Make a prayer before the true Guru to let you meet (that) Friend, on meeting the Friend one finds happiness and Death's messengers take poison and die . Death enters not there (where) the light is merged in Light Thou art the Friend, Thou the beloved Lord,[2] Thou the uniter with Thyself! (Brother,) in the words of the Guru praise (Him who has) no end or limit;[3] Death does not approach there where is the Guru's infinite Word (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 4· 5-6).

How foolish to drowse away the precious hours of life, careless of the future thus infallibly and inevitably earned! Intoxicated with the sweets of the present and eager for more of such pleasures, many forget altogether that their life is to know and love the Infinite and Eternal God, and to give all they have as sacrifice in His dear service Till the last moment they give no

[1] *liva lāgai*, *i e*, absorbs himself in devotional love, cf note 3 on (p 83) the force here is that a fiery love is the fruit of the long cultivation of the emotional love which is nearer to the surface

[2] *sujānu*, so translated by M

[3] *or* praise (God) with the Guru's word without end or limit

thought to what follows death, and so when the call comes they are taken all unawares

Made from the humblest of materials as it is, man's body is yet the holiest thing on earth, God's very temple, meant to enshrine His infinite Sanctity It must be kept clean and holy, that therein the precious feet of the Beloved may be lovingly treasured and adored The lover of God is always holy, the real saint, for his mind is ever bathed in the pure water of remembrance of Him who is the source of love and wisdom and goodness

Death is the forgetting of God, one who lives always in the thought of God can never die, even when his body falls away into the dust from out of which it came How can one living in the Eternal fall under Death's power? Death is the fruit of sin, of adherence to the petty ego which is impermanent, unstable, it is the natural fate of those who turn away from God their Life but can never touch those who are filled with love for Him

Brief is life, and the world is a trap from which it is hard to escape, nothing can save the soul but love for God—which should be our aim even in early youth, for none knows certainly how long he is to live This love is God's own gift, it drives out all false ideas and clarifies the vision of the Truth, and so infinitely deepens the attachment to it The lover finds the Beloved, and in His arms forgets the long fever of separateness To this end then let all our prayers be turned, so that God may in His mercy give us grace to love Him truly and, with the teaching of the Guru as our guide and inspiration, burn away the ego which is the veil that hides Him from our eyes

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TRUE GURU

Unaided man cannot come to God He needs the awakening word of the real Teacher sent to him by God Himself Such a teacher has to be himself a saint, wholly devoted to the Lord, sincere, kindly, and of good repute It may not be the recluse or anchorite who is near to God and able to lead others to Him, but the guide must be detached from worldliness in order to be able to save others from the world and bring them safely to infinite bliss

26. The Divine Teacher

1 One path (and) one door—the Guru, the ladder to one's own home [1] (N. *Malar ki Var*, 1 Sl. 2) Without the true Guru, the path is not found (B *Prabhati*, 1: 5), no one has (ever) found it by pleasing himself [2]

[1] I have kept here the clipped pithy style so characteristic of the Guru in his own Gurmukhi, though often barely intelligible when *copied* in English too exactly It reads *heko pādharu heko daru gura pauli nija thānu*

[2] *i e*, by going his own way, following his own ideas

(R. *Kanre kı Var*, 3 Sl 2). Without a Guru no one has obtained (God), for all his talking; it is he who shows the way and fixes true devotion (in the pupil) (N *Asa Ashtapadı*, 18: 4)

2 Some go here and there babbling a great deal, (but) no one has found (God) by talk (AD *Anand*, 16: 4), Nanak, there are no virtues in the one without a Guru,[1] one who turns (his) face away (from a teacher) has a lying mouth (N. *Saran kı Var*, 7 Sl 1) In the absence of a Guru there is (only) dust,[2] without (his) word no understanding is gained (N *Srı Ashtapadı*, 4· 6). If a hundred moons went up and a thousand suns rose, even if such a light were given, there would (still) be intense darkness without a Guru (A *Asa dı Var*, 1 Sl. 2); light comes from the Guru's teaching, and (then) one remains absorbed in the love of the Real (N *Srı Ashtapadı*, 4 6)

3. When **God** wills, (then man) meets the real Guru and magnifies the One Name

[1] It is interesting to compare these passages with those on the same topic in the *Gospel of Narada* (GN) They are equally insistent

[2] M reads "darkness" here, but the word *gubāru* is equal to *dhūl* in Hindı

(K *Kedara*, 4 3), it is he who applies himself to the service of a saint on whose brow (this) destiny is written[1] (Ar *Todi*, 8·2), (and) it is he who lovingly serves the Guru to whom (the Lord) has shown kindness (Ar *Bilawal*, 4: 1), (but one who) has never done good to others does not think of serving the true Guru (Ar *Todi*, 3 4) (Who is the Guru?) He is the true Guru in whose heart is God's Name, . and one who has served (him) without desire always obtains the Lord (Ar *Sukhmani*, 18·3, 2)

4 The Invisible, having (now) been revealed, is obtained from the Guru, Nanak, he is God's favourite[2] (Ar *Asa*, 145 3) Through the Guru the soul wins (real) life, through the Guru she goes to God's house Nanak, the disciple[3] is merged in the Real (N *Prabhati*, 6·4) **God** cannot be seen by anyone without the true Guru, but graciously causes Himself to be revealed by the Guru

[1] This shows clearly how what is "written on the brow" is the direct result of previous actions, there is no partiality or 'fate" here, but simple justice

[2] *cholhā*, dainty tibit, sweetmeat God loves the Guru best, so He always rewards those who serve him faithfully

[3] *guramukhi*, lit "at the mouth of the Guru", so one who obeys the Guru

(AD *Majh Ashtapadi*, 10:5) Today in our house is Spring, . it is always Spring when the Divine Teacher is met (Ar *Basantu*, 1:1, 3) (Today) through the Guru I have lost error and fear, and (my) eyes behold the Blissful Form (in) all (Ar *Asa*, 68·4).

5 When the Guru is met, the fear (of God) dwells in the heart (N. *Sorathi Ashtapadi*, 2·7) Nanak, I will go to ask my Guru and will depart to wherever the Lord is, the true Guru has become the go-between [1] for (my) meeting the Beloved (N. *Barah Maha*, 10, 11) If (the Guru) makes the disciple [2] perfect, (then) he gains the secondless Reality, . . . Nanak, if the Perfect is (really) met, how (can) virtue decrease (N *Sri*, 9. 1, 4)?

6 God (lets) one meet the Guru (according to) his past earnings, (N *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 4 5) without (the help of) a saint God's companionship cannot be gained, without a Guru the body (remains) filthy with dirt. There is no love without devotion to the

[1] Marriages are usually arranged in the East with the help of a mutual friend of the two families, so the Guru brings his disciple in touch with God The Gopi in Sri Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* plays this rôle

[2] *guramukhi*, lit "at the mouth of the Guru", so one who obeys the Guru

Guru, nor does a saint give his company without the Guru (N. *Basantu*, 5: 2). By the Guru's kindness God dwells in the heart, in no other way can He be drawn (R *Suhi*, 10: 1); by the perfect Guru is God's Name fixed (in the heart), without the Name life is useless (R *Jaitsari*, 1 2). Nanak, by (repeating) "Rāma Rama Ramu Rama Rām,[1]" the (supreme) state[2] is achieved; when the true Guru is met, he establishes the Name, and (then)[3] one is united to God's Name (R *Kalyan Ashtapadi*, 6: 8). (God) has kept Himself (hidden) in the true Guru (N. *Asa di Var*, 6); the Guru is God, (and) God is the Guru[4] (R. *Asa Chhant*, 1: 4); (there is) no difference (between) the supreme (and) the Guru (Ar *Bhairo*, 24: 4)

None can win the way to God alone, however much some may talk of independence and equality; only with the help of the Guru can light shine into the heart's dark places It is the good man who meets

[1] Different forms of the Name of God (Rāma).

[2] or the goal (*gati*)

[3] Experience confirms that the practice of repeating God's Names in any way can succeed only after the *mantra* has been imparted regularly by one who is by the practicant regarded as his Guru Then only it "sticks".

[4] A clear enunciation of the same thought as in the *Guru Vandanam Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnur* etc It is impossible for the pious to exaggerate their debt or the honour due to one who reveals God to them

this heavenly Guide, and it is by serving Him His grace is won and the road to God is thrown open Who is the Guru? The devotee who loves God with *all* his heart He who *has* God can share Him with another, can introduce to Him a friend and so fill that friend with unrivalled joy.

The very meeting with the Guru awakens that joy in the heart and makes it blossom with bright spring flowers, for the sight of Him disperses fear and anxiety, tells of early freedom, and reveals the Beloved Lord All obstacles disappear, the aspirant has now only one thought—to hasten to that Lord in whose presence he will become perfect.

There is no short cut to God, no easy way He is found through His own appointed means, the contact with a saintly devotee, to be gained only as the reward of past good actions Devotion is infectious, it arises in the heart even at the first such contact, it becomes a flame which burns away the dross and purifies the golden nugget there In the pure heart God Himself comes to dwell, in the manifest form of His Name, it is true to say that where the Guru is, there already is the Lord So close is the union between the saint and God that we cannot say which is acting at any moment; they are as it were the same

27. The Real Saint

1. No one but the devotee is accepted (by God) (G *Akal Ustat*, 38), (and) he who broods upon God's Name is the devotee; Nanak, from age to age greatness[1] lies in the Name (AD. *Ramkali*, 1.6) Those who please Him

[1] *i.e.*, true spiritual greatness like God's, or glory

are the good; what further explanation to make? Those possess wisdom, honour and wealth in whose heart It remains merged;[1] what sort of further praise (is possible) for them (N. *Sri*, 4: 3-4)? The Lover of devotees,[2] God, keeps company with them (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 9: 8)

2. Signs appear on the faces[3] of those in whose hearts is the true Name (N *Sri*, 6: 2): he who makes (good) use of *māyā*[4] knows the One God immanent (therein); and the sign of him is known—he stores up the wealth of patience[5] (N *Basantu*, 11: 3). Nanak, the true Guru is known thus—that he mingles freely with all[6] (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, *III*, 10); those who are engrossed in their Lord like every one (N *Wadhans*, 1: 1): He who dwells (throughout) the eight watches (of the day)[7]

[1] Cf *Gita* 18 78, the very last verse

[2] *bhagati-vachhu*, lit beloved of devotees

[3] A certain spiritual globe (*tejas*) is visible a radiance which shines out almost like a beam of light and is reflected on the faces of those around

[4] *i e.*, who is not ruled by *māyā*, but has it well under control

[5] *or* contentment, modesty (*khimā*)

[6] Seeing in all the One he loves, how can he be exclusive or draw curtains round himself? Openness of heart is a certain sign of true spirituality

[7] A watch consists of three hours, the ceaseless practice of the Presence is here given as a sign of perfection

in the Lord's presence, that man, says Nanak, is perfect (Ar *Sukhmani*, 17. 7), perfect in the world is he in whose heart there is no one else (K. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 38. 5)

3 (He has)[1] the *mantra* of God,[2] God's Name, and broods on (the One who is) fully (present) everywhere,[3] the wisdom (to look) equally on pain and happiness, a life pure and free from enmity, (he is) kind to all living things and has expelled the five vices; (his) nourishment is hymns to God,[2] remaining untouched by worldliness (like) the lotus (in) water, (his) teaching (is for) friend and foe alike, and he delights in devotion to the Blessed One, (he will) not listen to criticism of others, (but) giving up egoism (he becomes) the dust of all (feet)—being filled with (these) six signs, Nanak, a person (has) the name of a perfect saint (Ar *Sahaskriti Slokas*, 40)

The real Guru is the saintly devotee, the one devoted to God's Name and trying always to please Him, for He is always near to those who love Him in this way The devotee can be easily recognised he sees God in all, acts with all in a spirit of reverence and

[1] In the original this paragraph is in Prakrit

[2] God is here called "Rāma", "Gobinda", and "Bhagavān"

[3] *sarvatra pūrnah*

affection, in joyful patience endures all that comes, knowing it is from the Beloved's own hand, is easily pleased by the smallest kindness from another, and is at all times aware of God's loving watch over him. Unshaken by joy or sorrow, wholly free from anger and dislike, virtuous and kind, delighting in the worship of God, without the least taint of worldliness or egoism, eager for humble service of the lowliest of men—such a Guru can guide us to the Lord he loves.

28. The True Muslim and Yogi

1. To be (rightly) called a Muslim is hard,[1] when one is (surrendered), then he can call himself a Muslim. First let him find sweet the religion of saints, then remove the rust of pride and give away (his) wealth.[2] When he is resigned (to God), making religion the pilot of his boat and putting an end to the false idea[3] of death and life, let him heartily obey God's[4] pleasure, honouring the Creator and effacing the (petty) self. Having

[1] The language in this paragraph is full of Arabic words, as is suited to the Muslim audience to which it appeals.

[2] *avali auli dīnukari mīṭhā masakala mānā malu musāẓai*, this line, which even M found it hard to translate, is full of the alliteration in which the first Guru delights. I have followed Prof Jodh Singh here.

[3] *bharamu*, not "life and death is to be put away", but our wrong understanding of their real nature. The word means also "fancy, error, superstition".

[4] *Rabb*, the Arabic term for God, the Master.

then,[1] Nanak, become kind to all living beings he can then be (rightly) called a Muslim (N. *Majh ki Var*, 8 Sl. 1)

2 (Make) good works the Creed [2] you repeat, then shall you be a Muslim (N *Majh ki Var*, 7 Sl 3) Practise the books (like) the Qur'an, [3] put the wick of the fear (of God) in this body (of yours), and burn in it the understanding of truth [4] In this way the lamp will burn this oil, and having made a light you will then find the Master When (God's) words are impressed on this body, happiness follows and service is done All the worlds come and go; do service in the world,[5] and then, says Nanak, you will get a seat in Court and swing the arm [6] (N *Sri*, 33. 2-4)!

[1] Kindness to others is here rightly shown as the effect of selflessness

[2] *kalamā*, the profession of Muslim faith "(I believe that) there is no God but (the One) God, and that Muhammed is the Prophet of God" But no profession of faith can equal the doing of righteous deeds, which alone proves the sincerity of such a profession

[3] So reads M, but in my copy of the *Granth Sahib* I read "Purānas", of course, there is little practical importance in this, for both Muslim and Hindu require the same moral code, the same prerequisites for spirituality

[4] Guru Nanak delights in such metaphors

[5] The stress here on active service in the world is important, no true religion ignores our duty to man, which is not apart from the duty to God So too the Parsis' Scriptures

[6] *i e*, be able to do whatever you like in the future, being wholly free

3. The knower of God[1] is the Brahman; have no caste pride, (you) stupid fool, for from this pride many evil results proceed (AD. *Bhairo*, 1: 1) What advantage in cleansing this (body), when there is impurity within the heart (K *Sorath*, 8: 1)? The (real) Brahman bathes in the Gnosis[2] of God; (his) leaves for worship[3] are God's glories: one Name, one God,[4] one Light of the three worlds (N *Maru*, 11: 2)! The Name of God (established) by the Guru's grace in the house of the body captures your Lord God[5] (AD. *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 1: 8); he is to be called a Brahman who day and night is rapt in the love of God (AD *Gujari ki Var*, 10: Sl 1)

4. O yogi, this will not be yoga to leave the family and make a home elsewhere (AD. *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 1. 8)! In the house itself (there may be) renunciation (AD. *Sri*, 1. 4); in the house itself is always the beloved,

[1] "God" in this context is almost always "Brahm", the infinite Absolute

[2] This word, the Greek equivalent of Skt *jnāna*, seems the best translation of it in most places, for it includes the idea of *love* as well as mere *knowledge*—the union of which is true *wisdom*

[3] In several forms of Hindu worship leaves, *e g* of tulasi and bel plants, play a part

[4] *Narayana*, the "human" God.

[5] *Cf* the saying of Thakor Haranath in GN (p 183)

the Child;[1] He ever remains in bliss the Giver of happiness[2] (AD *Majh Ashtapadi* 27: 2); living in your own home, you can obtain Him (AD. *Basantu*, 9: 3) Making the house in every way (your) forest, understand in the heart (that you are a) hermit (G *Hazare Shabad*, 1· 1); why should **you** go searching in the jungle when there is a green wood in the house (N *Asa Ashtapadi*, 17. 1)?

5 Regard all activity save the one supporting Name as delusion (G. *Akal Ustat*, 50). Nanak, the (real) yogi is the friend of (all in) the three worlds (N. *Ramkali Ashtapadi*, 2: 8); when the true Lord Himself throws a look of grace (on a man), then he becomes the servant of servants,[3] then he does service to the true Guru, day and night and never leaves his presence, as the lotus remains untouched in the water, so is he renounced in the family (AD *Ramkali ki Var*, 7· Sl 2).

[1] *ghara hī mahi prītamu sadā hai bālā* This may also be "The beloved Child is always in the very house" Every human child is as it were a form of the Divine Child, Sri Krishna or Sri Rama, how then can family life divorce God's lover from the sight of Him? Rather is it the easiest way to Him

[2] So he will not treat unkindly those who depend on him in the family, by leaving them for selfish retirement and meditation

[3] *Cf* the Latin name beloved by the Roman Pontiffs, *servus servorum dei*

6. Nanak is the servant of those (who) live in solitude (with) the One dwelling in the heart, without expectations in the midst of (those full of) expectation, seeing and showing forth the Unattainable (and) Imperceptible (N. *Sidh Goshti*, 5)! When (there is) expectation, then (there is) also anxiety; how can one do (this and) speak of the One? When (a man) remains desireless amid desires,[1] Nanak, then he finds the One; in this way he crosses over the ocean (of the world) and thus "dies" (while still) alive[2] (N. *Ramkali*, 3: 4-5). He does not chatter or speak (but) gathers a wealth of contentment and burns up passion with the (fire of the) Name. . . He who fixes the mind on God's feet, (who) remains desireless (amid) desires[3] and is in love with the One—he is a Sannyasi[4] (N *Maru Ashtapadi*, 7: 7-8); he causes fear to no one, nor does he fear any;[5] Nanak says, "Hear, O mind, you may call that man a Sage[6] (T *Sloka*, 16).

[1] *or* hopes, expectations, cf *Gita*, 2 70; *nirāsā parama sukham*

[2] *i e* becomes a *jivanmukta*, whose 'ego' is dead that the Self may live.

[3] *Cf* *Gita* 2·24.

[4] *lit*: "renouncer of all"

[5] *Cf* *Gita* 2: 15

[6] *or*. Gnostic, (*jnāni*)

7. He treats happiness and sorrow (as) both the same and regards honour (as) dishonour, stands aloof from exultation and grief,[1] and recognises the Real (hidden) in the world (T. *Gauri*, 1 · 1) The knower of God [2] is purer than pure, higher than high, yet in his own mind lower than all, the glance of God's knower rains down nectar . (and) he delights in helping others, (yet) the knower of God loves (only) the One, . (so) **he** is free from care (and) possessed of all, (because) **he** is himself the Formless One (Ar *Sukhmani*, 8. 2-8).

We boost ourselves with high-sounding titles, we call ourselves Christians, Muslims, Brahmans, and the like, but how often do we ask ourselves how far we are really followers of the Christ, wholly surrendered to God, or knowers of the Divine? The true Muslim is indeed the perfect Saint, the name "Muslim" is of no value if it does not bear its full significance of resignation to God's holy will and abandonment of the petty selfishness of man It is not enough to wear a label and demand admission to Heaven on the strength of that label—God looks into the heart, where our deeds and thoughts are written, and judges us only on that infallible record If we really do what the Prophet teaches, if we really follow the "Sermon on the Mount", if we really perceive the Immanent in all and treat all with love and reverence as His manifestations—then

[1] *Cf Gita* 12 18-19, etc The whole passage is parallel to Gita thought

[2] *i e*, the *Brahmajnāni* or Gnostic

we need claim no label, for as we step before the judgment seat of God our hearts in triumphant joyous tones will name us His

How foolish to rely on the "caste" of ancestors and to claim, "I am a Brahman, because they too were Brahmans born"! God is known through devotion to His "Name", as St Bonaventura (quoted by Tanquerey, *op cit.* p 464) says, "The best way to arrive at a knowledge of God is to taste the sweetness of His love." He who thus knows God, the devotee, is the only real Brahman, and he bathes eternally not in Gangaji or any other holy waters, at Kasi or elsewhere, but in the nectar of His presence

Nor is it "yoga", union with God, to wander from the house and beg from others here and there God is everywhere, in the house as much as in the forest, in family duties as much as in sacrificial fires or silent meditations One who runs from Him in the household where He has placed him, will certainly not find Him after deserting his God-given duties No earthly work or duty can ever come between the true aspirant and his Lord, it is as easy to practise the Presence while washing clothes or scrubbing floors or keeping office ledgers, as it is while standing on one leg in holy places far from human haunts and amid Himalayan snows As easy? Nay, easier far, for God has willed the first while man's pride preferred the second, and God loves humble obedience more than pride and self-will Wherever he may be at the time, it is when God calls the aspirant to His feet that His grace descends and He draws nearer and nearer till the state of perfect union becomes possible, presumption on our part wins not grace but rather merits God's stern reproof Dwelling in the midst of worldly duties, among worldly folk, the true devotee remains always immersed in the wordless bliss of God's love, which surges round him like a mighty sea of nectar, and he is there a shining light to all his neighbours

Such a devotee is the greatest of men, free from all attachment, he quietly does as a sacrifice to Him the work God gave to him to do, turning everything he touches into a sacramental grace by his total inward absorption in the will of God Without thought of personal reward, without passions or overmuch talk, undisturbed by the whirl of worldly thought around him—such a one is the real Sannyasi, and not the egotist in orange robes exploiting the simple piety of village folk and boasting of his great renunciation Such is the real Brahman, the knower of his God, the enlightened Gnostic, whose very presence is a blessing to the world and who in himself manifests the Lord of all

29. Brooding on the Word

1 The Lord is not found by egotistic argument, nor is the truth [1] obtained by setting up the "I—I"; he who studies the Guru's word gets rid of egoism (N *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 12 4, 13· 1, 3) (Yes,) the Lord is found when the mind is happily engaged upon the Word (N *Barah Maha*, 6) Beloved, Thy words are nectar, most beautiful dear Charmer [2] in the midst of all, yet distinct [3] (Ar *Devagandhari*, 29: 1)!

[1] *or* the Real One (*sach*)

[2] *manamohana*, a common name for Krishna, *lit* fascinating the heart ,

[3] The *visishthadvaita* position also God is immanent in all, yet also transcendent over all, one with creation, and yet not identical therewith

2. I direct the words of (my) mouth to all, but hold (my) soul near to the Lord (Ar. *Asa*, 54: 2). We have come (here) to listen to and read (His) Word (Ar. *Sarang*, 79: 1); (for) giving the mind (to that we) shall obtain the delightful Name (N. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 12: 4), (and) it is always Spring for him in whose heart (is) the Name (Ar. *Basantu*, 3: 1), (yes,) he shall meet with greatness in whose heart the Word pervades (N. *Ramkali ki Var*, 12 Sl. 1) By means of the Guru's word egoism is lost from within, (and) God Himself comes to dwell in the soul and heart, (which are) ever plunged into peace and spontaneous happiness [1] He is near, and He is far, by the Guru's word one sees (Him) always present (AD *Basantu*, 5: 2, 6: 2)

3 The True One, the Creator, is invisible and secondless, no end (can) be found of Him; their coming (to the world) has become fruitful who have pondered on (that) One in the heart (N *Alahania*, 3· 3-4). The owners of

[1] *sadā sānti sukhi sahaji samāi* Teja Singh translates *sukhu* regularly as "peace", *e g* *Sukhmani* (Psalm of) (mental) peace, but passages like this show that the usual Hindi meaning of "happiness" is to be preferred

wisdom, meditation and virtue[1] please the Lord, and then they are pleased (in turn) (N. *Barah Maha*, 13).

Not by much talk or clever discussions among philosophers and logicians can the truth be known or the Lord found, nor by meditative silence apart from the stream of life, but by the active contemplation of the Guru's teaching—holding the heart on God, the mind on His Word, the hands upon His work among men "If you love Me you will keep My commandments," said Jesus, and for this we have to be wholly dedicated to the Lord and keeping the egotistic self altogether out of sight

This is the purpose of life, holding firm to this, we find the heart will blossom into divinity while God takes His seat therein amid deep peace and overflowing joy We who can thus enthrone Him over our lives find Him everywhere around and know nothing in the world but Him

30. True Religion

1. Yoga[2] is not the patched cloth, yoga is not the staff, yoga is not the smearing of ashes; yoga is not the earrings and shaven

[1] *giānu dhiānu guna* i e, knowing-love (of God), quiet contemplation (of Him), and the ensuing good qualities of virtue these three are here given as qualifications for success in the search for God

[2] This section is a complete hymn, which Guru Nanak is reported to have sung to a group of "yogis" who criticised his unconventional dress and ways It is a lesson of use to us all, of all creeds

head, yoga is not the blowing of conches:[1] remaining unspotted amidst impurity, thus is contact with yoga gained[2] (N *Suhi*, 8: 1)!

2. Yoga is not mere talk, (but) the yogi can be called the one who looks upon (all) equally with one regard; yoga is not (going) out to tombs and burning-grounds,[3] yoga is not the adopting of postures;[4] yoga is not roaming in foreign lands, nor is yoga bathing in holy waters.[5]—remaining unspotted amidst impurity, thus is contact with yoga gained (N *Suhi*, 8: 2)!

3 (When) one meets the true Guru, then are doubts broken up and distractions brought under control, a gentle rain (of grace) falls drop by drop,[6] one listens attentively to

[1] *or* horns to attract attention, mendicants make such sounds as they enter a village

[2] The rhythm of the song will be well shown by the first paragraph, which reads *jogu na khinthā jogu na daṇḍai, jogu na bhasama caṛāīai, jogu na mundī mundi mudāyai, jogu na singi āīai*, and the refrain repeated at the end of each paragraph. *anjana māhi niranjana rahīai, joga jugati ia pāīai*

[3] Many "yogis", specially those of various Tantric schools, make a practice of living in cemeteries, etc, where it is said at times they used to be guilty of nameless outrages on the dead

[4] *tāli* so translated by M, specially as "*padmāsana*"

[5] *i e*, going on pilgrimage to Kāsi Rāmeswaram, etc (*tīrthi nāīai*)

[6] *Cf* § 1 1

spontaneous music,[1] and the very house obtains happiness: remaining unspotted amidst impurity, thus is contact with yoga gained (N *Suhi*, 8: 3)!

4 Nanak, remain "dead" while living,[2] practise such a yoga! The horn sounds without being blown,[3] (and) then you attain the fearless state: remaining unspotted amidst impurity, then[4] is the contact with yoga gained (N. *Suhi*, 8·4)!

This is true Religion—devotion to God amid the whirling waves of the world-ocean, imbuing it too with a love for the holy Name, and filling every heart with joy and peace This is yoga, and not the outward show which so delights the conceit of the egotistic mind

[1] *sahaja dhani lāgai*

[2] *Cf* § 28 6 and the note thereon

[3] *i e* the "voice of the silence" in the *anāhata-cakra* of the heart

[4] In this place the usual *iva* changes abruptly to *tau*, then

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DIVINE NAME

Finite man cannot directly see or know the Infinite and Ineffable God, it is only when He deigns to reveal Himself by taking some manifest Form that the creature may become aware of Him, and that "manifest Form" is called the "Name" The Name is God Himself, adapted to our powers of perception, and it is the only path through which we may approach Him Without this contact we are as good as dead, with it we are full of blissful life and soon come to merge in Him, the beloved Source of Life

31. God's Name is Saviour

1. Without God's Name who has (ever) attained the Goal[1] (K. Gauri, 4: 4)? There is no purity without the Name of God (N. *Basantu*, 5: 2); what can the Yamuna do for those whose tongues (already) love God's Name[2] (K. *Asa*, 5: 1)? (Why,) Ganga,

[1] *gati* the supreme state of union with God, or at least of blissful enjoyment of His presence, which is the purpose of life

[2] *Cf* § 24 1 The theme constantly recurs in the *Guru Granth Sahib* as a natural protest against the prevailing external ceremonialism, which is pure superstition

Yamuna, Triveni Sangam, the seven seas, charities and worship are (all) contained (in the Name);[1] in age after age I have known the One Supreme Lord, repeating God's (Name) with great delight, I bathe in the sixty-eight holy waters (of pilgrimage)[2] (N. *Barah Maha*, 15) The disciples (who) brood (on it) receive nectar, and it is they who are really pure Day and night repeat the Name, O mortal, so that (your) impurities may be washed away (N. *Malar*, 1·3), (for) by remembering God again and again transgressions are destroyed (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 9·4)

2. The poisons of greed and lying are spread throughout this body; (but,) Nanak, the disciple who continually drinks the nectar of God lives in health; disease does not

[1] Neither the Ganges, nor the Jumna (as they used to be called), nor the place where their waters mingle near Prayāg (Allahabad), can wash away sin Only God, the source of all purity, can do that by His grace, which is given through the Name Nor all the waters of the ocean, nor any kind of righteous action, can avail to this end—it is an unearned gift of God

[2] *mahā rasu Hari japi athasathi tīratha nātā*· I have not found a complete list of these "holy waters" wherein pilgrims are to bathe, it would obviously include Gangotri and Yamunotri, Prayag (Triveni Sangam), the union of Gangaji with the sea, Pushkara Lake, Badrinarayan, Manasarowar Lake, Nasik and Tapoban, Paithan, Alandi and Dehu, Brindavan, Dwarka, Udipi, Bhadrachalam, Rameswaram, Kanyakumari, Dhanushkodi, Tirupati, the Kaveri near Srirangam, but the list would doubtless vary from time to time according to the preference of different sects

enter (even) the dream of those who love the medicine of the Name (Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 45 Sl.), (and) when there are very serious difficulties God's Name in a moment takes (them) away (Ar *Sukhmani*, 2: 1) It is the Lord who in a moment saves and carries (us) over the very fierce world-ocean (Ar. *Gauri*, 83. 2); we cross over the world of darkness by clinging to (His) feet (Ar *Mundavani*, 1· 5) The One Name saves (us from) the world, by the Guru's grace the Name is dear (to us, for) without the Name no one has attained to Liberation (AD *Basantu*, 10: 3)

3. I gathered the fruits of sin and filled (my) heart, so that (my) heart forgot the Lord, the Supreme Person (D *Ásа*, 1: 2) (Now) my only lamp is the Name, I have put in it the oil (of) suffering, by its flame that (oil) is now exhausted and I have escaped the meeting with Death A lakh of logs collected together, one spark (is) applied (N. *Asa*, 32: 1)! Darkness is effaced, wickedness given up, and the heart is reconciled with God [1]

[1] So M *mite andhāre taje bikāre Thākura siu manu mānā* The music in this line is obvious even to the non-knower of Gurmukhi, it is typical of that true poet, Guru Arjan, and almost demands to be sung

(Ar. *Suhi Chhant*, 4: 4). O Infinite One, if I had committed no sin, how couldst Thou have won the Name of "Purifier of the Fallen"[1] (Rd. *Sri*, 1)? With every breath Nanak sings (God's) glory, and the true Guru has drawn a curtain (over) **his** sins (Ar *Majh*, 17: 4).

4 Everyone rests in hope of Thee (Ar *Majh*, 2: 3), (and) those imbued with the love of God's Name have no load of error (to carry); great is the gain of repeating God's (Name, they are) fearless (because) God is in (their) heart (N *Sri*, 23: 4) He whose inmost heart is pure, . in that person all fear is cut away (R. *Bihagale Chhant*, 5: 3).

5. Man Nanak, so ponder always in heart and mind on God's Name that at the last moment it may bring (you) rescue (from shame) (R *Gauri*, 13.4); by honouring and praising the Name honour arises and a true "thread"; in God's Court (man) obtains a pure "thread" (which) will not break[2]

[1] *patita-pāvana*, a favourite name of Sri Rama as the Redeemer

[2] The "sacred thread", as a sign of social superiority as belonging to one of the upper castes, awoke the Guru's scorn even as a boy when he was to be invested with it The true "thread" which ties us for ever to God, is the love for Him and repeating of His Name. This alone wins His favour.

(N. *Asa di Var*, 15 Sl. 3). Though he makes many efforts (yet) the heart does not melt—how can such a one go to God's Court[1] (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 12: 3)? They know not the secret of themselves, but give a verbose description of Heaven![2] When the mind is attached to the hope of Heaven, then it cannot be attached to dwelling at (God's) feet[3] (K. *Bhairo*, 16: 1) Mortal, brood on the One Name and go to your (real) home with honour (N *Malar*, 1: 1)!

6. Where no pain of separation arises in a body, deem that body a burning-ground (F. *Sloka*, 36), (for) without the Name egoism goes on burning[4] (AD. *Basantu*, 12: 3). Nanak, the whole world is in pain, the one who obeys the Name obtains victory—no other action is of any account (N. *Ramkali ki Var*, 14 Sl. 1). Those who are without the

[1] No matter what a man does, if he acquires no gentleness and sweetness of character, he cannot hope to be received by God as His own

[2] Ignorant of their own nature and defects, how can they presume to speak of transcendent things? *Cf* GMC 30 3 The Sikh equivalent of Gk. *gnōthi seauton*, "know thyself".

[3] A striking warning to those who hold out the hope of Heaven as the main attraction to the spiritual life, it is an unworthy aim

[4] In the body of one who does not even miss or feel the need of a God, there is indeed a perpetual fire of passions and desires

Name will be rejected, no one will keep them company (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 4·3); **they** will not get Liberation, (for) the disciple wins Liberation (only) through the Name Without the Name of God useless is birth in the world (N. *Bhairo*, 8: 1) He who pleases God meets the Guru, and (then) he ponders on God's Name (AD. *Sri Rag di Var*, 10) God, O God, Thy Name is the remover of pain![1] (R *Tilang Ashtapadi*, 2: 4)!

7 (When) the heart is thrilled on hearing the Name,[2] then is the door of Liberation won (N. *Asa di Var*, 10 Sl. 2). Golden the body and spotless the soul in whom the stainless and shining Name (abides); all sorrow and disease are driven away; Nanak, it escapes by means of the true Name (N *Malar*, 7: 4) (So) let him who is called a Sikh of the true Guru[3] arise early and ponder on God's Name

[1] *Hari Hari terā nāmu hai dukha metanahārā*

[2] This idea frequently appears in the *Bhāgavatam*, and was insisted on by Sri Ramakrishna as a sign of the nearness of God's grace. But such thrills and even tears of love may not appear in certain souls who are even nearer to God, it depends on the temperament of each whether these "signs of Bhakti" appear openly or not

[3] *i e*, a pupil of the true Teacher I have kept the original word for obvious reasons—this being the source of the pious custom of *nāma-smarana* and the singing of the Guru's hymns by Sikhs for the three hours before dawn, during *brahma-muhūrtam*

Let him bestir himself at early dawn and bathe in the nectar tank (of the Name); taught by the Guru, let him constantly repeat God's (Name),[1] and all transgression, sin and guilt will be taken away. At sunrise let him again sing the Guru's hymns and . . brood over God's Name. He who at every breath in and out meditates upon my God is a Sikh of the Guru and pleases the Guru's heart (R *Gauri ki Var*, 11 Sl 2)

God alone can purify and remove the stain of sin. From Him all holy things derive their holiness, He is their source, the unfailing fountain of perfect purity. Spiritually washed in the holy Name, the disciple becomes infinitely pure as the Immaculate God Himself, for with Him no sin can cohabit, no evil can share the heart with His holy Name So full trust in His saving power is the certainty of salvation, the highest gift of the Divine Guru to suffering men

From life in this fallen world we gather up many sins, but not one can remain when the water of God's Life flows over them That spiritual baptism washes away every spot in the heart, fires of love consume the dead twigs of failure fallen from the trees of our life Before the infinite light of God's presence the black darkness of ignorance and error flees away, for He is our Redeemer and raises every child of His into the radiance of His presence

This is our only hope, and it banishes all fear of sin, of hell, of rebirth in this unhappy world where we

[1] *Hari Hari japu* The Name is given twice to suggest the repetition.

may feel separated from His love. For perfect love casts out fear, and love is the natural fruit of a sight of Him gained through the heartfelt "chanting" of His Name It purifies the heart and adorns the soul with the "sacred thread" of the true Brahman or God-knower, it is the passport into Heaven

The soul without the Name is lost in the raging fires of egoism and passionate desire, unable to win her way from that misery to God's company where is peace and joy. When God would save a stricken soul, He sends His messenger with His Name, revealing Himself thereby, and sets the love of Himself in the poor sinner's heart The inner Glory shines out through the disciple's body as he broods constantly upon God and is slowly transformed into His likeness; all defects are burned away from him as he grows in his love for God and clings more and more to the worship of Him at every moment Thus he draws nearer to the "door of Liberation", and so becomes a "Sikh" indeed and not in the mere name alone

32. It is Life

1. What have we but the Name of God [1] (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 9: 1)? (My) brother, (our) body and property are not (real) companions, God's Name is stainless wealth,[2] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 15: 1), accompanying and helping (us) (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 9· 1); wherever we go, there it (also) goes (AD *Gujari*, 2: 3) (When) the

[1] *lit* What is ours . *Rāma nāma binu kavanu hamāra*

[2] *i e*, possession which has no such defect as instability

body perishes, whose is its property called (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 9: 1)? (All) other capital[1] than God is deceptive;[2] it goes not with (us) when (we are) made to depart (AD *Gujari*. 2: 3). Some charitable gifts, many kindnesses, do not equal the Name in weight (N. *Wadhans Chhant*, 1·4), (but) he to whom (God) is gracious comes to obtain that (Name) through his own good deeds (N *Sri Rag di Var*, 18 Sl. 1)

2. Nanak, on (our) departure (hence) all false friendships are snapped (asunder)[3]. . Those who have been regarded as Kings and lords come to be seen as (mere) ashes;[4] when they have passed into the future (life) they realise (that) without the Name (their titles) are vain (N *Sri*, 6·4, 3) As useless as husks without the grain (are) mouths empty of the Name (Ar. *Gauri*, 65: 1) It is hard to repeat the true Name (N. *Asa*, 2· 1); it is the Lord who has it given by the Guru; . if the real Giver give, (then) there will in the future (life)

[1] *rāsi· lit* the stored-up wealth

[2] *kūṛi, lit* false, unreal

[3] This is the consistent teaching also of the "spirits".

[4] *sultāna khāna ho de dithe kheha*

be no question of the one whose comrade is the Guru, the Creator[1] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 15: 1-2). O heart, make that beloved God (your) Friend, and always keep the mind (on) the Support of (your) life (Ar. *Gauri*, 39: 1)! Remain alive,[2] Nanak, and worship the Name of God continually with love (Ar *Bawan Akhari*, 26 Sl)!

3 Only the Name of God (can) delight the heart; in return (comes) nectar filled with the essential Reality (J *Gujari*, 1: 1); he whose heart and body are lovingly attached to the Name is drenched with nectar (Ar *Suhi Chhant*, 10: 4). The one who is united with the Name remains (ever) in love with the (Divine) Void[3] (K *Maru*, 4· 4) (God's) servant is intoxicated through and through with (His) presence[4] (Ar *Majh*, 18: 1); on remembering the Lord's Name, heart and body dissolve (in love) and he drinks (God's) nectar

[1] Note the identification of the (Divine) Guru with the Creator here, God is not other than His saints, and the Guru is His saint

[2] Forgetting God is death, so to remain alive is to remember Him (cf § 32. 4)

[3] " Void " (*sunna*) may be understood as the " Divine Dark " of Dionysius, it is not quite the teaching of a *sūnyavāda* like that so violently denounced by Vaishnavas

[4] *oti poti* lit " warp and woof "; cf § 13 2

(Ar *Sri Chhant*, 3: 3). Of what sort are those who forget not the Name? Realise (there is) no essential difference (between) God[1] and them (Ar *Asa*, 108: 1).

4 Forgetting the Name, the blind has neither this (world) nor that (N *Sri*, 3: 1); forgetting the Name, he loses honour and intelligence[2] (N. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 11: 4), (and) by forgetting God (his) virtue (also) slips away into dissolution (N. *Maru*, 3. 1). O heart, if your breath goes in vain, then without God you will die (N. *Sorathi*, 7: 1), dying is the forgetting of God, while living is the brooding upon God's Name (Ar. *Gatha*, 15) Lord, this is my heart's desire: . that with every breath I may remember my Lord and remain always in the company of saints (Ar *Deva-gandhari*, 26 1-2)! Thou forgettest those who wander (away from) Thyself; (if) Thou forgettest (me), then must I die indeed! (AD. *Gauri*, 7· 1-2) (So) let (me) gaze upon (Thy) face without blinking and not for a moment turn the mind away (Ar *Jaitsari ki Var*, 12 Sl. 2)!

[1] *Sāīṅ*, the same as the well-known name Sai

[2] *pati mati khovahi nāmu visāri*

5 O darling God, kind and loving,[1] . . . high, unfathomable, infinite Lord! I live by continually remembering (Thee) (Ar *Majh*, 9: 1)! Without the Name, how could I live, O mother?[2] Night and day I keep repeating (it), putting (myself) under **His** protection[3] (N. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 12: 8) (While) I utter (the Name) I live; (if) I forget (it) I must die . . Then how can I forget it, O my mother (N. *Asa*, 2. 1)?

All things else in this world are unstable, unreliable, on God alone and on His sacred Name we can depend with absolute certainty of faith Even our virtues are worth little, the noble qualities we may have gained, if they be not enriched by that infinite Grace of God which is their crown and purpose At death we have to leave everything else and stand as it were naked before God and all mankind, the only covering in that hour is our faith in Him, His Name is our only refuge then And it is not easy to acquire this greatest of all gifts, for it is *not* the mere verbal utterance of mystic syllables or dear-loved names—that would be superstition, childish and absurd, it is the loving self-gift of the whole heart to the Unseen Lord, putting oneself in His presence with an act of surrender, of adoration and

[1] *lāla Gopāla dayāla rangīle*, the beloved names of Sri Krishna are often used in this way for the One Supreme God, and rightly so, for Krishna is He, to those who correctly understand the Vaishnava texts

[2] These songs were actually addressed by Nanak as a boy to his own mother when she urged him to become worldly like other boys.

[3] *terī saranāī*, in the original, *i e*, Thy

aspiration, it is the very essence of true prayer, and not a mere prayer of words Words may or may not accompany this prayer

So great a gift as the Name can come to us only in a worthy way, God confers it through the Guru, the saintly devotee whom He sends to us when ready to receive him And then, because our yearning is at fever-heat, we find in his presence an upwelling fountain of bliss, a ceaseless flow of nectar, whose sweetness inebriates and inspires until we are filled with godliness, and even our bodies shine with something of our Father's glory With what joy we drink that nectar of God's love! A long desert tramp on a hot day over soft sand, the burning sun overhead, the mouth as dry as leather—and then the deep shade of great trees, the music of running waters, great draughts that cool and delight the whole heart and soul! Such is the coming of the Name to those who receive it from the God-sent teacher, its melody turns them into Gods and all the world into a garden

Without that nectar we die of thirst, apart from God we cannot live in the parching heat of worldliness But for God it were impossible to endure this world, lost in the agony of folly, vice and shame How then can we bear to lose sight of Him even for a moment? Let us cling to the society of saints day and night, so that we may always have Him in mind and heart, and so enjoy the sweet delights of Life Eternal!

33. And Joy

1 Pure, pure, pure (and) holy![1] Nanak repeats (that) Name with love in the heart,

[1] M translates this with a Trisagion, "Holy, Holy, Holy," but those words connote something not in the original *pavitra pavitra pavitra punīta*

. . . for all happiness lies in love for the Name; . . the Name of God is the glory[1] of man, through God's Name man obtains beauty,[2] (and) the Name of God is for man (both) delight and union (with Him)[3] (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 12:8, 5, 2:6) God[4] is beautiful (N. *Malar ki Var*, 1 Sl. 2), good and beautiful is the hut in which (His) glories are sung, while the mansion where God is forgotten is nothing worth (Ar. *Suhi*, 41:1). (Once) this sweetness (has been) enjoyed, it cannot be left again;[5] no other sweetness can compare with it (Ar. *Gauri*, 15.4). I have tasted all other flavours and the heart has seen that God's sweetness is sweeter than all (Ar. *Majh*, 15:1).

2. (Man) is born and dies in many births,[6] on repeating the Name he obtains rest (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 2.3). (When his) hunger attaches itself to the true Name, then (he) satisfies the

[1] *vadiāī*, *lit* greatness

[2] *sobhā*, *or*. splendour

[3] *bhogu jogu* *lit* enjoyment and union with God, *i e*, earthly and spiritual pleasures alike

[4] *Thākuru*

[5] *iha rasa rātī bahuri na chode*

[6] *joni*, *lit* wombs

hunger therewith[1] (and) the pain departs (N. *Asa*, 2: 1). I have listened (in vain) to the songs, music and poems of poets, but at the Name of God (all) sorrow flees away (N. *Barah Maha*, 13) The moment wherein (He) does not enter the mind, that moment goes in vain[2] (Then) I would sell away this body to a buyer if I could find (one); Nanak, the body in which the Name is not has no value (N *Suhi*, 7: 3-4) A pauper indeed is he in whose heart is not the Name (K *Bhairo*, 8. 4), (so, my brother,) urge the mind to repeat it with every breath you take (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 1· 1)

3 If one were to live and eat a hundred years, that day would be acceptable when he realised the Master (N *Asa*, 4: 2) I surrender, (my) soul surrenders to those who have caused the nectar Word to dwell in (my) heart,[3] who ponder on the honey-sweet Name and are drunk with love in (that) nectar-sweet Love (of God) (This) nectar is obtained by the Guru's grace, . . at (his)

[1] So St Augustine "Our hearts are ever restless till they find their rest in Thee" (*Confessions*, 1 1)

[2] *Cf* GN 30 1

[3] *hau vārī jīu vārī amritu bānī manni vasāvaniā*, *i e*, I adore them.

command accepting the nectar, at (his) command they drink the nectar too (AD. *Majh Ashtapadi*, 16: 1-4) (If) anyone sings or hears the Names of God with attentive mind, he most certainly attains at last the Supreme State[1] (K *Gauri*, 55: 4), if anyone knows (Him) in the centre of the heart—he who speaks becomes Himself[2] (K *Bhairo Ashtapadi*, 1· 8)!

God is our only real delight, from Him come all beauty and all joy The very sound of His Name recalls the enchantment of that infinite Beauty which is His, and which He has so lavishly scattered abroad through His creation Indeed His is the only beauty, those without Him are hideous to the clear-seer, whatever be their outward shape or form The humblest cottage where He is loved and honoured is more than the palace of worldliness, to His lover nothing can be so sweet as His silent presence, His soft touch, His vibrant song Once known, he will never let it go Even when all spiritual efforts have ended in success, when God is owned in all His fullness—still the saint clings to His Name and loves to utter it, singing in all melodious tunes the praises of his Beloved

Only these songs console a heart wearied with the long roads of earth Age after age rolls past the pilgrim as he struggles on towards the Light, friends come and go, delight gives place to pain and hope to misery—but

[1] *paramagati*

[2] M greatly weakens this striking passage, it is clear *jo bolai so āpai hoi* The Guru's hymns repeatedly teach this final mergence with, identification with, God, and not only a vague assimilation to Him " like Him ".

the loving thought of God is a constant joy. Without it, even one moment seems an age of agony; its possession is a treasure for which His lover would gladly barter all he has, a pearl for which he would give away his whole wealth Only the moments spent with God are life, those of forgetfulness are worse to him than death

This inebriating sweetness comes from God through the Guru, he alone can carry it in the chalice to the thirsty disciple and let him drink it to the fill. Wise indeed, the wisest of the wise, are they who love this intoxicant, who pass their hours imbibing the honeyed nectar of God's presence, for this intimacy assures the ultimate union with Him who is their all in all and their unending joy

CHAPTER SIX

THE WAY TO GOD

The Guru now tells us how that final Goal can be attained When God calls the soul to Him, the Guru acts as go-between, and the soul learns from the Guru how to surrender his heart wholly to the Lord God's lover cannot but love all His children, so the devotee is kind and gentle, wise and patient—the treasury of all goodness derived from Him on whom he ever meditates, humble and generous, looking on God as an infinitely loving Mother A life of perfect consonance with His will, misled by no superstitious beliefs, a life of prayer and faith in His grace, seeking Him as the only aim and treating all other attractions as irrelevant, a life of ceaseless abidance in God seen now in the heart as in all else—rejoicing in the company of others of His lovers whose sole delight is in Him, learning to sink quietly into His arms, holding nothing back from Him, yielding to Him all personal desires and feelings, and yet manfully standing in the world for Right—such a life swiftly carries the soul to God its Home

34. The Need for a Guide

1 Without a Guru Liberation is not won, (my) brother (Ar *Gond*, 7. 4), nor (can man)

escape from *karma* without a Guru (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 5: 7) (Even) if you perform a lakh of (good) deeds,[1] (there is still) darkness without the Guru (N *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 18. 1) (When God) gives grace then is the true Guru found (R *Suhi*, 6· 4), to those for whom the meeting with the true Guru is written he comes (AD *Sarang ki Var*, 31: 1), (yet) in this world few repeat the Guru's *mantra*[2] (T. *Sloka* 56). Man Nanak, among crores (only) a few find how to worship God (T. *Gauri*, 3: 2), who become disciples and realise (Him)[3] (T *Dhanasari*, 2: 2)

2 The one to whom (God) Himself gives love and devotion is very very rare in the world[4] (Ar *Gond*, 17: 3); if the true Guru is met thus he satisfies the (demands of) grace (AD. *Gujari ki Var*, 3), and by serving the true Guru infatuation is consumed and in the house itself (there is) renunciation (AD *Sri*, 8: 1), then is the sweetness of God obtained

[1] *karama*, this may mean, as M has it, "ceremonies" Cf *Gita* 18 66

[2] This lament is found in most of the world's scriptures, for it is the experience of all God's lovers

[3] *kinahu guramukhi hoi pachānā* Cf *Gita* 7 3

[4] *jaga mahi virale koi koi*

(R. *Suhi*, 7: 4) He who immerses the heart in the immortal water of Gnosis carries with him the sixty-eight holy places, there is no holy place equal to the Guru, so that Guru then becomes (for him) a tank of consolation (N. *Prabhati*, 6: 1).

Nanak here again insists that those who would seek God absolutely must take a Guru, but he comforts us by saying that when we are ready for such he will certainly appear It is by ordinary goodness in our daily life, by the faithful discharge of our duties, by longing for God, that we are made ready for the Teacher, whom God sends to us the moment we can benefit from his teaching Few really desire that teaching, blessed indeed are we if among those few!

Having met the Guru, it is then our joy and privilege to serve him in lowly humility and with all devotion Then shall we find his very presence a purifying stream which washes out the countless dust-stains on our spiritual garments, stains gathered during the long wandering over earth's scorching desert of separation

35. The Need for Devotion

1 That is prayer,[1] mortification,[2] service [3] and attendance [4] which pleases the Master

[1] *japu*, *lit* repetition (of the Name), which is the highest form of prayer (see Introduction)

[2] *tapu*, *lit* penance, *i e*, all practices aimed at forcibly gaining control over mind, body and passions

[3] *seva*, *i e.*, clinging to and enjoying the presence and service of God or a great man, or a holy place

[4] *cākarī*, *i e*, doing lowly personal service for

(AD *Sarang ki Vai*, 27: 2), (and) those are devotees, those are knowers of the Essential, who honour (God's) command,[1] . without service there is no devotion (AD *Gujari Ashtapadi*, 6: 6-7) He is the good man and anchorite[2] who has caused the Name to dwell in (his) heart (AD. *Sri*, 8: 3)

2 God,[3] the Guru, is won by devotion (N. *Maru Solhe*, 21 11), (for) those who have gained love (and) devotion do not burn in wickedness (Ar *Barah Maha*, 14) Because of the Truth impurity (cannot) get a hold, and the heart (grows) pure by brooding upon God (AD *Sri*, 7· 2). Without worshipping the holy Blessed One,[4] or delighting in the Unity, even Kings have no (place) in the record (of honour)[5] (G *Sawwaiya Mukhavak*, 4. 4), (for) in the heart (the two) earrings are surrender to God and the Guru, Nanak, a man is saved by devotion to God (N *Ramkali*, 11 4) By devotion I (myself) have attained, by

[1] *se bhagata se tatu giānī jinakau hukamu manāe*

[2] *sādhu bairāgī*

[3] *Gopālā*, Krishna as the protector of souls

[4] *Srī Bhagavān bhaje binu*

[5] *i e*, can find no niche in the hall of real fame

becoming simple[1] I have met God the King[2] (K. *Gauri*, 6·4)!

If we would please the Master, we must do gladly what pleases Him, trying to anticipate His desires and not to serve ourselves by doing what *we* ourselves think best Having thus pleased the Guru, we shall find we have then also pleased God, and then He will rain down His grace on us and fill us with the nectar of His love Never again shall we then fall into the sins which displease Him, for there can be no darkness where the Infinite Light has shone forth, nor filth amid the cleansing streams of Boundless Holiness Where God is, there is no impurity And God is always with His devotee So only the devotee can be really pure

36. Kindness and God's Grace

1 Keep no feeling of enmity for anyone, God is contained in every bosom (Ar *Bawan Akhari*, 46), (and) on the head of the one who stirs up enmity against the (man) who has no enmity all the world's sin falls[3] (R *Gauri ki Var*, 13 Sl 2), (while) he who looks equally on foe and friend comes to Liberation (T *Sloka* 15). Enmity and opposition are removed from the heart of him who listens to

[1] *or* foolish (*bhole bhāi*)

[2] *Raghu rāyā*, *i e*, Rama, the Divine King of Ayodhya

[3] Evil leads to evil in return, if the victim of slander has no slander in his own heart the slander returns with a redoubled force upon him who sent it forth

hymns (about) God from the Guru's mouth (Ar *Bawan Akhari*, 46), (*but still you should*) *give your head rather than forsake those whom you have promised to protect*[1] (4: 391 T).

2 Beloved outside Him who is within,[2] there is no other besides (N *Sorathi*, 11: 2), do not utter even one unpleasant word,[3] (because) the True Owner is in all; give no pain to any heart, (for) all are priceless jewels, (yes,) the hearts of all are jewels, it is bad to injure them in any way (F. *Slokas* 129-130) (So) be angry with no one (but) think of your own (defects), remain humble in the world, Nanak, (and you will) cross over by (His) grace; becoming the dust of all (feet), give up egotistic pride,[4] and your remaining (sins) will vanish (Ar. *Bawan Akhari*, 44).

3. God becomes the sugar spilled in the dust, which the elephant cannot pick up; . . .

[1] This beautiful sentence is not in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, it may be by some other Sikh giving the purport of the last words of the Ninth Guru, suggests Prof Jodh Singh Guru Tegh Bahadur himself gave his life to save those who relied on him

[2] *jo antari so bāhari dekhohu* We are in Him, and He is equally in us

[3] *or* curse (*fikā*)

[4] What is impossible for the great and lordly becomes very easy for the little ones who creep in the dust St Thérese's "Little Way" Such can enter heaven under the door!

dropping (pride of) family, caste and descent[1] become the ant, pick (it) up and eat (K. *Ram-kali*, 12: 2). Those whose hearts become the dust of (the feet of) everyone perceive the Name of God in every breast, (they) drive out evil from their own hearts, and regard the whole of creation as friends (Ar *Sukh-mani*, 3: 6).

4. Nanak, cherish his body who remembers the Lord, in (whose) bosom the lotus feet abide, (and whose) tongue repeats the (Name of) God (Ar. *Bihagale ki Vai*, 14 Sl. 2). The person who has realised his Lord becomes able to give all things; Nanak, ever worship the feet of that person (Ar. *Sukh-mani*, 17: 8)! God ever remains aloof from those who indulge in wrangling and in pride (G *Vichitra Natak*, 6· 13); having escaped from the "I", there is bliss, (for) where the "I" is not, there is He[2] (Ar *Bawan Akhari*, 51)

5 He in whose bosom God remains as dweller comes to sing the glories of God

[1] *abhimānu*

[2] *hau chutakai hoi anandu tiha hau nāhī taha āpi* Hereby the Guru declares what is essentially the *sādhana* of Advaita, as of Christianity and of every other path to God cf GP 28 1

(N. *Asa Patilikhi*, 18); understanding manifests and honour results when he imbibes the fear (of God) from the Guru's talk; Nanak, the true King[1] (then) takes him to Himself (N. *Sri*, 10: 4) (When) by the Guru's grace He comes to dwell in the heart, pain and darkness go from it (N. *Asa*, 3: 3), (but) those who are absorbed in the Master and enjoy the bliss of (His) embrace are dependent on (His) strength and remain humble (N *Sri Rag di Var*, 7 Sl 2) Always, always are we Thy children[2] (and) Thou art our Master, O Lord; Nanak (says), Thou (art) the Mother and Father (of us) children;[3] (put) the sugared milk[4] of Thy name in (our) mouths (Ar. *Todi*, 5: 4)! We play, and Thou caressest all (of us)[5] (Ar *Ramkali*, 6: 3)!

How can we hate one whom we see only as our heart's Beloved? It is only the blind who hate; those who throw stones at the sun get them back on their own heads, and those who cast enmity or slander at God's children are struck by their own returning missiles Seeing God everywhere, the devotee can never be angry with anyone, nor can he be unjust or

[1] *sacā pātisāhu*, a title often given to the Guru, here to God

[2] *or* boys, here pupils before the master, (*cohare*, *mīrā*)

[3] *bārika*, little children before their parents

[4] *khīrā*, *payasam*, cf GN 37 1

[5] *hama khelaha sabhi lādaladāvaha*

proud, how could he, who is swimming or drowned in God, pour out rudeness, hate or evil? To such the whole world is God, seen reflected in His smile and loved as His creation Such souls are the perfection, the crown, of our humanity, blessed are they, and blessed those who keep their company They are known as free of egoism, for God and selfishness cannot live together, the one or the other must go, as light and darkness cannot together occupy the same place

Those who surrender to God as tiny children, who drink the nectar of His grace from the love-full breasts of the Divine, are the real Saints of God, absorbed in Him, they humbly rest in His unconquerable might

37. The Straight Path

1. Vain is the life of the unbeliever[1] (Ar *Sukhmani*, 5: 6); (you may) regard all (false) religion[2] as fruitless (G *Akal Ustat*, 50) Without truth how can one become pure (Ar *Sukhmani*, 5· 6)? Call no one evil so as to get into a quarrel (N *Wadhans Chhant*, 1: 3), whom **are you** to call bad when (there is but) one Master of all[3] (A *Sarang ki Var*, 2 Sl 1)?

[1] *birathī sākata kī ārajā*

[2] *sabha dharma*, the word cannot here mean, as often, *duty* or *righteousness*, nor can it mean that one creed is false and another to be chosen instead—the Gurus lived in no such narrow bigotry, rather we may compare it with the *sarva dharmān-parityajya* of *Gita* 18 66 and understand it thus all self-relying ways to God are fruitless because based on egoism, we have to rely on Him and surrender wholly to Him, for no other act can avail and He alone can save

[3] The same idea as in §§ 12 2, 36 2, etc

2 If anyone knows the fear (of God), the one word of all words (A. *Asa di Var*, 12 Sl. 2), the chief work of this body . . (is) to hymn the Name of God (K. *Basantu*, 2:3). Without (acquiring) virtue the birth is ruined; . if the pure Name be not forgotten, (man) becomes the recipient of virtue (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 6:1, 11:7). The Formless One goes on creating creation, and action in the Lord's heart is good action[1] (N. *Barah Maha*, 1). Honest action is the (very) essence of (God's) Word (AD. *Majh Ashtapadi*, 8:4). (so) the world praises those who walk in the path of honesty (Ar. *Barah Maha*, 12).

3. Never do at all such an action as you will have to be sorry for at the last[2] (AD. *Anand*, 11:4); in the soil of duty sow the seed of truth and so practise tillage,[3] then you will know (good) business and carry off the profit (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 13:8). Let (a man) make a free gift of the body (in service);[4] (if) he realises the field and sows

[1] or the act of obeying the Lord is good action, for that is good which pleases Him (cf. § 35. 1)

[2] *aisā kammu mūle na kīcai jitu anti pachotāīai*

[3] *dharama bhūmi satu bīju kari aisī kirasa kamāvahu*

[4] or: the body makes charitable gifts (*punna dāna*)

gifts (in it), that tiller will be accepted in Court (for) he (will) receive what he has himself done (N *Sloka* 17) Having under the Guru's teaching given up evil, he will become equal to the Perfect One (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 6· 1) (But) to him who calls himself good goodness does not come[1] (Ar *Sukhmani*, 12· 3).

4 Eat that which He gives, says Nanak seriously (N *Gujari*, 1 4), but by putting spices in forbidden food it will not become lawful (N *Majh ki Vai*, 7 Sl 2) Those whose Guru is blind eat the uneatable and give up and leave what may be eaten (We are) conceived from flesh, from flesh born; we are masses[2] of flesh Pundits understand nothing at all of Gnosis[3] or meditation, but are called clever Meat was used in the Puranas, and meat in the books[4] of the four ages, crying "Meat, meat!", fools quarrel, but (they) know neither Gnosis[3] nor meditation,

[1] *Cf* GH 11 4 How can one be good who is filled with egoism and pride?

[2] *lit* vessels (*bhānde*)

[3] *giāna* I have generally preferred so to translate this word, which has no exact English equivalent but is cognate with the technical Greek term

[4] *Not* "Muslim" books, as M has it, for there were no such books during the "four ages" Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali, but only in the last The Guru tells us that meat-eating has been

or what is meat and what is called vegetable, or in what the sin consists.[1] You arose from the (blended) bloods of mother and father but eat no meat! All living creatures come from flesh and take their abode (therein); if you come to give up such tastes you will be a sannyasi, says Nanak with deliberation (N *Malai ki Vai*, 25 Sl 2).[2] *Those who realise the First Person as the One God let no other belief*[3] *enter, their hearts; they who cherish any other belief shall be debarred from meeting the Friend* (5. 308 G).

Silencing the least breath of criticism in his heart, the devotee gives his whole energy to maintaining there the presence of God, "repeating His holy Name" by day and night, never letting the mind for a moment stray into blind imperception of the All-Pervading This is the only true Religion, the essence of spirituality—not

allowed from primordial time, and hints that even the greatest of Rsis who gave us all our scriptures were meat-eaters themselves and did not forbid meat to their disciples until the days of the Buddhists and the Jains

[1] The "sin" consists in needless cruelty to sensitive creatures, and not in the material from which the digestive organs subtract what the body needs as food Nothing is really *impure* save what is forbidden by the Guru, *i e*, by God And that differs for each soul

[2] Somewhat rearranged

[3] Such superstitious beliefs, throwing emphasis as they do on the unessentials, act as barriers to true spirituality and increase pride and the tendency to criticise others who do not share our own customs

the performance of empty ceremonies, the offering of cruel sacrifices, or the muttering of surface prayers through heedless lips Nothing but Purity can purify, nothing can make true but the Truth, nothing implants love but Love Himself, God is the only means, the practice of His Presence the only real *sādhana*, which can avail to bring the soul to Him Charity and honesty, humility and righteousness, blossom naturally where He, the Source of all fruitfulness in virtue, dwells, nor are they possible in His absence

All He gives us for our earthly needs is pure The Guru does not here advocate that all should eat flesh, but warns us against the superstitious belief that by abstention we can become pure, that spirituality is based on diet, that what goes into the man can defile him (*cf* GJ 47), and in brief that *moksham* depends upon the contents of the stomach So we have absurd arguments about whether fish or eggs are vegetables; whether eating eggs violates the law of *ahimsa*, whether eggs are sensitive to pain, and the like, wasting life's precious moments in childishness instead of learning how to love and worship God Experience proves that in fact it is perfectly possible for even the foulest eater to tread the highest path in spirituality, while the most punctilious abstainer from flesh, alcohol and nicotine is not infrequently a very sink of materialism and lust The man who conceived the horrors of the Nazi camps at Belsen and Auschwitz was a strict vegetarian, a teetotaller, and a non-smoker

38. Prayer and Faith

1 The Master is the strength of the strengthless (Ar *Sri Ashtapadi*, 1: 1) (and) the support of the helpless [1] (Ar *Sri*, 13: 2);

[1] *Cf* the favourite Hindu title for Him *anātha-nātha*

(so) when your own strength does not avail, clasp your hands and worship God, (saying) (1. 33 N): "Carry me across, O God, carry me across! I am an ignorant fellow and know not how to swim; Father Vitthal,[1] give (me) an arm (Nd *Gond*, 3: 1)" (He is) the wise Giver, gentle, pure, beautiful, infinite; . What one asks (of Him), that one obtains (Ar. *Sri*. 13· 2) O my heart, abide ever with God; He will cause all sorrow (to be) forgotten, He will welcome (you) and arrange all your affairs (AD *Anand*, 2: 1-3). (When) God the King [2] is the shelter (you seek, then) service of the Lord is (your) gain (Ar. *Barah Maha*, 11).

2 Those persons who truly offer devotion to Thee, Thou arrangest their work, (O Lord) [3] (D *Dhanasari*, 1: 1); whatever (such) may do is (done) for love of the Lord, (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 14: 8), (and) that work is pleasant which is for Thy sake, (O God) (Ar. *Majh*, 2: 1)! Nanak, the far-sighted gains happiness and

[1] *Bīthulā*, apparently a form of the name of Krishna as known and loved by the Mahratta saints, among whom Namdev was one of the greatest

[2] *Govinda Gopāla rāi*

[3] *Cf* the famous *Gita* verse, 9 22

(his) heart (becomes) patient through the Guru's word (N *Barah Maha*, 3); the Lord being kind to (him) will give (His) grace, (and then) he will cause God's work to be done (N. *Asa di Var*, 15) Spring is theirs who have sung God's glories (AD *Basantu*, 16: 1), and a flood of nectar rains down in delightful drops when the Friend of kindly [1] nature meets (them) and love for God is built up (in their hearts) (N *Barah Maha*, 4)

3 What shall a silly girl do when the bride pleases not (her) Spouse? [2] She may make supplication and many attempts, (but) she (cannot) win (entry) to the Palace, [3] without grace [4] she can obtain nothing, even if she receive much (else) (N *Tilang*, 4 2) God comes into the house [5] when it pleases

[1] *or* intimate, natural, easy, (*sahaji*)

[2] This metaphor for the soul's relationship with God is extremely old, we find it fully developed in the book of *Canticles*, it is present in the Manichean *Psalms* "Take me into Thy bride-chambers that I may chant with those who sing to Thee", it appears in the *Odes of Solomon* "Like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride, so is My yoke over those who know Me", in the Babylonian ceremonies "He may give me the holy exalted bed-chamber" We find it even before literature in the whole complex of Mediterranean rites as the "*hieros gamos*", and it is still the favourite metaphor for mystics of our own day, as for the Tamil saints

[3] *or* bed-chamber (*mahalu*)

[4] *or* good works (*vinu karamā*)

[5] *or* comes to (His) temple (*mandari*)

the Lord, (and then) the woman stands up and remembers (His) glories (N *Barah Maha*, 4)

4 The mortal imagines, "This body is mine," and clings to it again and again; snared by sons, wives and household, he finds no (chance of) becoming God's servant (Ar. *Gauri*, 13: 1) If anyone prays false prayers,[1] it will not take him a moment to die (Ar *Majh*, 43. 1), when you pray then you pray for worldly things, from which no good comes to anyone; if you ask for any need, ask for one (thing) only, Nanak, from which [2] salvation comes (Ar *Bawan Akhari*, 41). The Beloved's desire should be your own desire [3] (S *Bilawal*, 1 1)

5 If you would strive for the Beloved, cut off (your) head and make (it) a ball; playing and playing (with it) [4] reach the state (of feeling): "Whatever is, is He (K. *Sloka* 239)!" Nanak, giving (his) head (for God) a (man) escapes (from worldliness) and receives

[1] *jhūthā manganu*, M reads prays for worldly things

[2] *or* for the One from whom

[3] *kāmārathī suārathī vā kī paya sawārī*

[4] In this mood one of the early Babi martyrs about to be beheaded recited the Persian verses, "How joyous the lover who knows not if it be a rose or his own head which he throws at the feet of his Beloved!"

honour in (God's) Court (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 18: 8)

It is the Almighty on whom we are to depend, an all-powerful Lord who is the very acme of mercy and kindness and never refuses a prayer for help He undertakes for them the business, the responsibilities, of His devotees and carries it through to completion, so that all they do in His Name and for His sake in this world is sheer joy because they love Him

Nothing the devotee may do has any pleasure in it if it be not pleasing to his Lord, only by giving Him delight can he hope to enjoy His company, without which his own life is vain and purposeless When the mere utterance of the heart's desire before its Beloved ensures its being granted, will not the devotee take care that his heart's desire be only for such things as may honour his Beloved? God will give whatever he asks for, let him then ask only for spiritual grace, for the welfare of His Church, the Khalsa, for the power to offer up for Him his very life and all he has The countless martyrs who died with unflinching courage for the Faith, even in our own days in the Punjab, have now " received honour in God's Court "

39. Seek God Alone

1 What comes into being is all destroyed (T *Sarang*, 3: 1), the whole world is like a dream[1] (T *Sorathi*, 8. 1); (so) the pursuit of worldly (business) is a stupid and wicked act

[1] *sagala jagatu hai jaise supanā*, this sounds like *advaita*, and in fact comes very near to it

(N *Prabhati Ashtapadi*, 3·2), (and) it is good to break from the obstinate[1] who love the glamour of worldliness (AD *Bihagale ki Var*, 2 Sl 1) If he break not (that) glamour he will find no place (hereafter) (N. *Asa*, 23: 5), (for only) the renouncer can serve God[2] (Rd. *Gond*, 1. 2) The Lord becomes his who has no one (else) (Ar *Asa*, 162: 3), the Lord is (his) one Friend, Companion, Comrade (Ar. *Gauri*, 87: 4) O Lord, how can sorrow reach him over whose head Thou art (as Protector)? . . Death cannot come near (to him) (Ar. *Suhi*, 57: 1)! That love which is directed towards any other shall fade away (Ar. *Jaitsari ki Var*, 4 Sl 2).

2 God[3] is the death of the glamour of worldliness, when death comes, is it *then* (we are to) remember (Him) (N *Asa Patilikhi*, 28)? (God) shows grace (and) then this glamour goes; Nanak, then (one) remains absorbed in God (N *Asa*, 23. 6). In God (he finds) all the loves which delight the

[1] *or* pig-headed, following his own opinions, (*mananmukhā*), the opposite of *guramukhī*, the one who follows the Guru's advice

[2] *Mukundā*, the giver of liberation

[3] *Madhusūdana*, the slayer of the demon Madhu, *i e*, sense-intoxication

heart[1] (Ar. *Barah Maha*, 4); one whose affection rests in any other than God[2] feels ever miserable (Ar. *Dhanasari*, 2: 4) Unless he meets God the Friend, how can he find rest? .. Know that to live even one moment without Him (makes) the birth vain (Ar *Barah Maha*, 1-2). No more birth will take place if he once realises the True One; the disciple speaks of, the disciple understands, the disciple knows (only) the One (N *Asa Patilikhi*, 29) (Brother), with both eyes I gaze, but I see no other than God (alone) (K *Sorathi*, 4: 1)!

3. (My) daily occupation is to earn God[3] (Ar *Dhanasari*, 23: 1); my heart has become an unattached renouncer in the fever for seeing (my) Friend (R *Asa*, 15: 1). As the bee cannot remain without the lotus, so I cannot remain without God (R. *Asa*, 15: 1); without God I cannot remain a moment, just as the fish must die without water (R. *Asa*, 10. 1) (If) I break with Thee, whom am I to join? . I have joined Thee in true love,

[1] *ranga sabhe Nārāinai jete mani bhāvani*, a most beautiful thought

[2] *Govinda*, the protector of souls

[3] *Hari-Hari, i e*, the Saviour, whose Name is repeated constantly

and to join Thee have broken (all) other links. Wherever I may go, there Thy service (is); there is no other God like Thee, O God[1] (Rd. *Sorathi*, 5. 1-4); Nanak (says): "Father, (a man) may be held to have wept if he has wept for love, (if) he weeps for worldly things, father, all the weeping is wickedness (N *Alahania*, 1: 4).

4. In what way shall I obtain the Lord of Life? Fire is in (my) heart, vegetation (is) in bloom, I have gained an ocean in the intellect; both moon and sun are within the very house—have I not gained such wisdom (as is needed)[2] (N. *Basantu*, 11: 1-2). Thou remainest immanent in all, . . the Beloved of all dwells always near (them, and) by the Guru's grace a few are gratified by (His) glance (AD. *Majh Ashtapadi*, 6. 8, 4: 5) Thou (art) the Giver, we (are) beggars; O God, give us a sight (of Thee) (N *Asa Ashtapadi*, 15: 1)!

[1] *Thakur*, the supreme owner.

[2] A very mystical verse, whereby the Guru declares that he feels himself ready for the vision of God, his heart is aflame with longing, the flowers of virtue have blossomed, and the mind has become wide and deep, while night and day he receives light from within his own heart, needing no *outer* guide These are the qualifications M misses the point

5. Offer up all the body, heart and wealth, surrender (to Him) the whole of this life (Ar. *Sri*, 13: 4); look for nothing (in return) but the Name, (make) worship and love (into) the burning of wordliness, see the One, seek no other! (Such a devotee) perceives the Essential Reality at the tenth door of the sky (N *Asa*, 20 2-3) Look at the state of one slain by the sword. becoming righteous, he goes straight to the Truth and, Nanak, at the door (of Heaven) is lost in the vision (of God) (N *Ramkali ki Var*, 19 Sl 2)!

In this illusive and impermanent world only one thing merits our attention and our love Those who renounce worldliness and seek that one thing, the love of the Infinite Lord, our Friend, have the best that life can give, resting secure in that undying friendship, they are free from death and fear, while those poor fools who cling to unstable worldly objects are doomed to desolation and despair

One sight of God in a moment destroys the attraction of these worthless things, must we not then seek that vision of Him while we are still young, so that our lives may be fruitful and full of real joy? We abandon them for God, but in Him we find again all that we have given up for Him—for all are in Him, and finding Him we have all else besides, He is all The wise therefore seek Him alone and never for a moment turn away to other things apart from Him Making Him their sole business in life, they soon find in Him the utmost joy their hearts can hold—for He is Life and

Joy, wherever we may go we shall find chances to serve Him and so draw nearer to His beloved Heart

This is Nanak's own choice, his whole heart is aflame with longing for God, the only Good, for the Infinite can never be wholly attained, we find ever deeper riches in Him to reach Nanak finds God's lights aflame in his inmost being, guiding him to their Source He calls us too to surrender all we have for God, keeping nothing back, and promises us that God will surely free us from all error and give us place at His side in the heavenly Court

40. The Secret of Happiness

1 I am happy on rising, happy at sitting; fear cannot come when I thus understand (that) the One Protector, our Lord, is the Inner Dweller of every heart No anxiety in sleeping, no anxiety in waking—O Lord, Thou art everywhere pervading! I dwell happily at home, I find happiness abroad; says Nanak, the *mantra* has been planted firmly by the Guru[1] (Ar *Bhairo*, 2: 1-3)'

2 (There is) no happiness, O (heart), without devotion to God; . . it is he whose

[1] This beautiful little verse is sung by pious Sikhs when they first wake in the morning In the original it reads *ūthata sukhīā baithata sukhīā, bhau nahī lāgai jān aise bujhīā, rākhā eku hamārā suāmī, sagala ghatā kā antarajāmī, soi acintā jāgi acintā, jahān kahāir prabhu tūm varatantā· ghari sukhi vasiā bāhari sukha pāyā, kahu Nānaka guri mantra drilāyā*

wealth is God that is happy (Ar. *Gauri*, 139: 1, 12: 5), (while) without devotion life passes in vain (K. *Gauri*, 59: 1). (So) if you wish (to have) always happiness of every kind then plunge deeply into the sweetness of God (G *Hazare Shabad*, 3: 3); Nanak suggests (that) one who recognises God's command [1] will be happy day and night (N *Gauri*, 17: 6). Serve Him, and then receive the happiness which remains immanent in the (very) centre of all (hearts) (N *Asa Patilikhi*, 16). If you realise the Supreme God, you will have no expectations, [2] if you turn yourself to devotion to God, you will keep the heart free from anxiety (Nd *Asa*, 5: 1). Having come to love the One, (your) other desires pass away (K. *Sloka* 25), (and) the command of the Beloved is felt (to be) sweet (Ar. *Asa*, 95: 1)!

3. When the veil of falsity is taken away from within [3] (AD *Gujari*, 1. 3), the disciple breaks (his) egoism (and) **then** broods upon the Name of God, he repeats the Name,

[1] *or* will To see the Beloved's will in everything that comes is naturally the source of continuous happiness and peace of mind

[2] *lit* you will not look for pleasure from hope *āsā te na bhāvasī.*

[3] *i e.*, seeing everything through the dark glasses of ego

adores the Name, and by the Name is merged in happiness (N. *Majh ki Var*, 4 Sl 2) If anyone would remove his own sorrow, let him always sing God's Name in the heart (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 3. 5), never can sorrows (stay) near him who loves the praise of God (Ar *Asa*, 160: 2). If he be devoted (to God), he sees Him always present, my Lord remains ever omnipresent (AD. *Basantu*, 4· 3). "Know the One without and within!"—this is the wisdom the Guru has taught (T. *Dhanasari*, 1: 2)

4. Nanak, beautiful is he who repeats the Name of the Lord[1] (Ar *Gauri ki Var*, 4 Sl 2), (but) the beauty is ruined (when) pride is in the heart (Ar *Asa*, 12: 1) Beautiful are the feet when turned towards Thee, beautiful the head which bows to (Thy) feet; the mouth is beautiful when it sings Thy praises, and the soul (when it) falls in surrender (to Thee) (Ar *Ramkali ki Var*, 15 Sl 2) Beautiful are the faces (of) those who remember the Lord; they remember the Lord and pass (their) lives in happiness, . . . filled to overflowing with love's sweet delight (Ar *Sukhmani*, 1. 6, 20: 2)

[1] *Sāī* cf the English proverb "Handsome is as handsome does" The same theme has often been treated by English poets

5. From the Guru's teaching to the disciples (comes) the thought that the Kind One saves with a look of grace (N. *Asa dı Vaı*, 5 Sl 2). No love awakens without the Guru, nor does the impurity of egoısm depart (N *Srı Ashtapadı*, 11·9), there is no gıver greater than the true Guru, . (for) wıthout the true Guru the way is not found. If (God)[1] gives Hıs own gracious glance, then in the (very) glance the true Guru is obtained. . If He grants His grace, then (the dıscıple) makes use of the Guru's word, controlled in this way, trouble departs (N *Asa dı Vaı*, 4, 14 Sl 2, and A 7 Sl 2)

6 Nanak, when God's glorıes are spoken of even for a moment, then (a man) becomes happy (R *Asa*, 11 4); restıng or rising up, contınually brooding (on Hım) he becomes ever and always happy (AD *Malar kı Vaı*, 7 Sl 1) By considerıng the Self one becomes a Gnostic[2] (N *Gaurı*, 4 1), realısing the self (to be) God (*SOHAM*), he comes to be satısfied ın the Mystery through the Word When a dısciple realises the

[1] *or* (the Guru)

[2] *jnānī* ın Sanskrıt

Self,[1] what else is he to do or have done (for him) (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 11: 9)? He who has obtained the Treasure through love fixes (his) mind on **God's** feet (N. *Tilang*, 4: 3). Night and day become pleasant (once) egoism is dispelled; I got rid of the heart's infatuation when I pleased Him; (now, Lord), graciously come into (my) house[2] (N *Barah Maha*, 16)!

7. Happiness is not for those who make many friends in the world; it is those who keep the mind on the One who ever enjoy happiness (K *Sloka* 21) The servants serve (Him) who uplifts (them) by kindness, dewy[3] is the night of those in whose heart is a yearning (for Him) (N. *Asa di Var*, 5 Sl 2). Bliss is in the heart which delights in love (N *Barah Maha*, 16), (so) there is always bliss for devotees; they are put into ecstasy by singing the excellences of God[4] (Ar. *Asa*, 10. 2)

[1] *or* when with the Guru's help he realises the Self

[2] *i e*, heart

[3] *i e*, cool, happy

[4] *lit* jewels *Hari kiratanu gāi bigasāvai* The last word means literally "blossom like a flower", but is used for great joy.

Realising God as always present, Nanak is always filled with joy; whatever he may be doing, God is there at his side, and in His presence he can never know what it is to be afraid He advises us also to dive deep into this delightfulness of God's continual presence and we too shall find in it perpetual happiness All anxieties, all desires, fade away when we are with Him who is Himself the fullness of all blessedness.

Freed from egoism, ceasing to rely on his own efforts and leaning on the Omnipotent instead, the disciple finds Him everywhere and so is bathed in ceaseless waves of bliss Such a one is truly beautiful in whom the Lord resides, from whom the stains of selfishness and pride have gone It is the fulfilment of God's purpose in creation that all things should live in Him and thus "glorify His Name", those who employ their limbs in His service and unceasingly ponder upon Him are always shining with His beauty

It is the God-given Guru who can give us the strength thus to consecrate ourselves to God, so it is he who gives us that immortal joy we find in such surrender, and one glance from him may be enough to turn us into saints—if we are ready for his grace True happiness is found in the anchoring of the heart in the still waters of the Beloved's presence by means of love and constant remembrance It is unknown to those who seek for worldly friends, but lifts to ecstasy those who find the One true Friend who deserves that name and can fill their hearts Their love for Him makes even the darkest night ablaze with the radiance of deathless joy.

41. Holy Company

1. Wherever a devotee may go, that place is beautiful (Ar *Phunahe*, 18); the company

of good men is Heaven[1] (K. *Gauri*, 10: 4), (for) God is the Companion of devotees (and) the devotees adorn (His) Court (Ar *Maru*, 1. 4), there always . . the devotees abide sustained by hymns (Ar *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 4: 7); in the assembly of the righteous[2] (there is) bliss and rest (Ar *Dhanasari*, 23: 3). Nanak, in a crore there are few in whose mind God[3] (dwells) (T. *Sloka*, 24); among crores few saints appear; Nanak, one is saved in their company, (and) if (a man) be fortunate then he gets a sight (of them) (Ar *Prabhati Ashtapadi*, 2 8) The society of saintly people is won by (acts of) great merit (Ar. *Jaitsari ki Var*, 17)

2. The servant of a man (of God) is very fortunate; in the company of (such) a man he is lovingly attached to the One; . . the Lord is remembered in the company of the righteous[2] (Ar *Sukhmani*, 16 8, 1: 2). The homes

[1] *Baikunthai*, at no time to be confused with "*Swarga*", the "summerland" of Spiritists

[2] The word here translated by "good", "righteous", is *sādhu* lit one who is making definite efforts (*sādhana*) to attain perfection It is not synonymous with *sant*, which may be rightly rendered by "saint", or with *bhagata*, more correctly rendered as "devotee", M assimilated all these

[3] *Nārāina*

where good men [1] are not served, and where no service of God is, are like burning-grounds (K. *Sloka*, 192); without the company of the righteous [1] the fear (of God) does not arise, and without (that) feeling there is no devotion to **Him** (Rd *Dhanasari*, 2: 2), (while) in the company of good men [1] love is doubled day by day (K. *Sloka*, 100) (Nanak tells us.) "By serving a saint I developed love and affection for (my) darling Masters" (Ar *Asa*, 153: 1)

3. God, God, God [2] charms (my) heart, and I sing the glories of God, God, God (R *Gujari*, 2. 1)! In (my) heart (there is) a thirst for the vision (of God) (Ar. *Jaitsari ki Var*, 15); the disciple who utters (His) praise is (my) friend, (R. *Sri*, 3: 1), one who tells me anything of my beloved God, he is a brother, he is my comrade (R. *Gond*, 6: 2). Moment by moment I worship the feet of those who have made God sweet (to me) (R. *Jaitsari*, 3: 3); I am the dust of the lotus feet of those

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[2] *Govinda Govinda Govinda*

in whose bosom God remains immanent (K. *Gauri*, 26: 2)! God's people are an excellent tank of nectar; by very good fortune one can bathe therein . O God, drown (me) in the nectar of the Name[1] (R. *Ramkali*, 4·1, 6. 1)!

4 According to the company one keeps, so is the fruit one eats, (so) keep the company of a good man, he will take care of you at the last; do not associate with an unbeliever, whose (company) will become (your) ruin. . The unbeliever is a black blanket; (even when) washed he does not become white (K *Slokas*, 86, 93, 100); one should not speak to an unbeliever (even) by mistake (K. *Asa*, 20: 1). By associating with the righteous[2] and remembering God,[3] (even) the fallen becomes purified (T *Sorathi*, 1: 1), by singing the glories of the Lord (all) the eight watches (of the day), evil desire and

[1] *Hari amrita nāmu samhāre*, M renders *samhāre* simply "bathe".

[2] The word here translated by "good", "righteous", is *sādhu*, *lit* one who is making definite efforts (*sādhana*) to attain perfection It is not synonymous with *sant*, which may be rightly rendered by "saint", or with *bhagata*, more correctly rendered as "devotee", M assimilated all these

[3] *Mādho*, *i e.*, Madhava

anger depart from this body (Ar. *Bilawal*, 84· 1)

5. Impurity evades the company of good (people), and the Supreme becomes (their) Companion (Ar *Sorathi*, 65. 2); God the King meets that person who has entered the presence of the righteous [1] (Ar *Bilawal*, 46: 1) The holy Lord dwells on the tongue of a good man,[1] . . God [2] shines forth on the Saint's [3] brow (Ar *Sukhmani*, 1: 4, 24: 3). In the company of the righteous [1] a man is honoured by meeting the Guru (R. *Gujari*, 2· 1); (there is) true bliss in the house of devotees (Ar *Bilawal*, 3: 4), (so) rejoice on meeting the company of righteous (folk, my brother) (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 22· 5)!

6. He whose heart is cooled in the company of a saint finds coolness in all [4] (Ar *Sorathi*, 6. 2); the Lord becomes gracious to the one in whose heart He has implanted the

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[2] *Gupala*

[3] *mahānta*, the word used commonly for the Abbot of a Hindu monastery

[4] Cf "Unto the pure all things are pure" (*Titus*, 1 15).

Name; Naṇak, such a man longs for the company of the righteous and obtains the sweetness of God (Ar. *Todi*, 4·4). From God's Nạme are gained (good) memory, understanding, and thinking power,[1] and the beloved Guru from the company of a saint (N *Malar*, 5: 2). Where God is adored, there is God the Friend and Helper (R. *Suhi*, 10: 1); the Lord is with those souls who hold God dear[2] (R *Tilang II*, 2: 7).

7. Thy whole creation, my Lord, all yearns after the dust of the (feet of) the righteous (R. *Malar*, 2. 4), (for) on meeting a saint the True One is found (N. *Sidh Goshti*, 1). Whatever is God's belongs to His servant (Ar *Majh*, 18: 3); Nanak, the glory of the righteous merges into the Lord, . . brother, there is no difference between the righteous and the Lord[3] (Ar. *Sukhmani*, 7: 1, 8)!

8 Saints of God, repeat the Name of God! Saints of God, let us walk with God! Those who repeat God's (Name) become God, they meet God the playful Child[4] To repeat

[1] *sudhi budhi surati nāmi Hari pāīai*
[2] *jinā Hari seti pira hali tinā jīa prabha nāle*
[3] *sādha prabha bhedu na bhāī*
[4] *ina Hari japiā se Hari hoe Hari miliā kela kelālī*

the Name of God is my dearest desire; God, dweller in the forest, graciously let me meet God in the company of the righteous (and become) the dust of the feet of good men (R. *Dhanasari*, 4: 3-4)

The skin is blackened by pitch and whitened by chalk powder, disease spreads by contact, holiness awakens from the touch and very sight of a Saint. Hence the importance of *satsang* in the spiritual path.

The saints are always in God's presence, and where God is there is Heaven, so the neighbourhood of a saint is itself Heaven, and his occupation is that of Heaven—the eternal glorifying (not by words alone) of his beloved God. The lover is happy in thinking of the beloved, so the saints are always happy, and those who cling to them share that supernal and infectious happiness There are few indeed who are really devoted to God (cf *Gita* 7·3), almost all seek some reward for themselves and so are self-seekers rather than seekers after God Those who have selflessness enough to enjoy saintly company get that blessing and are happy in serving God in the person of His lover This service makes their rudimentary love grow stronger day by day until it sweeps through the whole heart in one vast wave The bliss of this total surrender is due to those who first started it, the disciple is filled with gratitude to his blessed Guru who has led him to this joy.

Good comes from the good, so those who wish for goodness must seek the company of good folk and avoid the wicked, the worldly and the egotistical God reveals Himself through the very body of His devotee (Cf GN 16.7), while the unbeliever's company is a deadly danger—near him wickedness increases, just as sin flees before the saint

It is the rudimentary love for God which brings the aspirant into saintly company, and there he finds that the tiny spark of love is fanned into a roaring flame which burns away all evil and warms the heart with all sweetness of self-sacrifice With how much eagerness, then, the sincere aspirant longs for such company, in whose midst he will find the Guru who unites him to the Lord! That Guru, the Saint, lives in the Lord, as He in him—there is no barrier between, there is as it were no difference between God and His devotee, one who finds the one is equally in the presence of the Other

42. The Love of God

1 From age to age God has brought forth devotees and has continued to keep (His) promise (to them)[1] (R *Asa Chhant*, 13: 4), from age to age the devotees are dear to God (AD *Gauri Chhant*, 4: 4) God the Master protects His own devotees (R *Gauri ki Var*, 14 Sl 2), removes the pain and sorrow of the poor, and (is) the true delight of (His) servant (Ar *Sri*, 13 1) To be kind to devotees is God's (very) nature,[2] God protects their honour (R *Asa Chhant*, 8 4); He Himself adorns (them),[3] Himself draws (them) to devotion (AD. *Gauri Chhant*, 4: 4).

[1] This promise is given in *Gita*, 6 30, GMC 30 1, GI 58 2, GZ 51 5, and in countless other places in a hundred scriptures

[2] *bhagati vachalu Hari biradu hai*

[3] *Cf* § 47.

2 Devotion to God is the love of God, if the disciple were to consider (this) carefully, he may be called God's servant who keeps God pressed to (his) bosom[1] (AD *Sri*, 6: 2-3) When (this) love for God has been built up within, then whatever (a man) does is pleasing to God, my Lord (R *Gujari*, 7· 7) When the Beloved is seen (at the) gate, what (more) can Liberation or Heaven do? Intoxicated with praise (and) always renounced, (the disciple) does not lose (his) birth in the game (of life) (N *Asa*, 38: 3-4) Once the very sweet love of God is secured, everything else is forgotten; then indeed is the heart contented, (for) He comes to dwell in peace in the heart (R *Sarang*, 4 1-2)

3 The cup[2] of the True One is naturally perfect, He gives it to drink to the one on whom He looks with grace (N *Asa*, 38: 2) God the Lover (fills) with the love of God (the one who) night and day sings God's glories with love for God (R *Ghona*, 1· 2: 5)

[1] There can be no steady service save where love is the motive, the mind soon wearies of it unless spurred on by the holy feeling

[2] The "cup" is presumably that spoken of by the Sufis, it is filled with the wine of love and is given by the King with His own hand to His favourite courtier

Without love God cannot be obtained (G. *Thirty-three Sawwaiyas*, 18); without God's sweetness [1] there is no Liberation for anyone (N. *Maru Solhe*, 8: 10) Those who are filled with love for the One disregard human opinion and so are happy (5: 319 G) [2]: if you turn to Him with sincere love, then you shall win God [3] and be absorbed into the feet (you have) won (K *Bawan Akhari*, 36)! (He) may be called a (true) lover (who) always remains immersed (in love) (A *Asa di Var*, 21 Sl. 1); (so) saturate this heart (of yours) in the love of God (R. *Asa*, 9: 1)!

4 The disciple may laugh, the disciple may weep, whatever the disciple does is from devotion to God [4] (R. *Sloka* 14). O heart, let your love for God be such as the lotus (has) for water; even (when) dashed about by the waves it blooms in (its) affection. O heart, how can you escape (from sorrow) without love? (God) is immanent in the disciples and grants (them) a treasure of devotion. O heart,

[1] *rasa*, the sweet juice of a fruit, so love

[2] From the Introduction to Guru Govind Singh's " Puranas ".

[3] *Allāh*, the usual Muslim name for Him

[4] *Sāī*, also a Muslim name

let your love for God be such as the fish (has) for water; the more it has, the more intense (its) happiness and the greater the peace in (its) mind and body; without water it does not live for more than a few minutes [1]—the Lord knows its sufferings (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 11: 1-2)!

5 God never forgets the one who feels the love of God in (his) heart, and who ever repeats the Name of God in heart and mind (AD *Gujari*, 4 1) Night and day he remains spontaneously immersed in love and worships the Name of God in (his) heart (R *Suhi Chhant*, 4. 1) In age after age I have known the One Supreme Lord (N *Barah Maha*, 15), (my) heart is inebriated by drinking the sweetness of the Name and remains spontaneously lost in love, day and night I am resolved to fix my love (on God) and to hear the uncaused sound [2] (N *Asa*, 38: 1) To devotees nothing seems sweet but God (Ar *Jaitsari ki Var*, 11)!

God keeps His promise to guard the devotee and lover who clings to Him, could He be less faithful than

[1] *lit* twenty-four minutes (*ghali*)

[2] *i e*, *anāhata*, the mystic sound in the heart-*chakra*

His own creature? He draws such ever nearer to Himself and adorns them with every virtue and grace And when they come to Him they find in Him the most absolute return for their love in an unending bliss which drowns the very memory of the long lonely ages

This "reward" of His grace comes to the soul which loves Him for Himself alone, and finds all joy in Him alone, so that the idle chatter of the mob cannot disturb it from its rest in Him The true love of God is that which never slackens; even when it flows underground and unseen, it pours on in a steady flood towards the ocean

The soul may have earthly ease and comfort, or it may have ceaseless troubles and have to tread the thorny path of martyrdom—but still it clings to the chosen God of its heart and its love deepens with every event of life Be it sorrow or happiness, joy or pain, all is joy because it comes from the Beloved, all the soul's actions are suffered with the rapture of knowing it is for Him and His glory all is done and ensured.

Such a devotee indeed lives in God, starves without Him, bathes in Him as the fish in the mighty sea Nanak himself is one such soul, for uncounted ages he has found his happiness in God and loves to spend his every moment in that adoring love which fills life with immortal sweetness

43. How to Find Him

1. He cannot be realised by cleverness; without hammering how can the value be brought out[1] (N *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 2. 1)?

[1] Gold is purified and made more valuable by beating on the anvil, so is the soul's vision purified, made clear, by suffering and pain

(One must) beat out egoism, (and) then shall he meet God[1] (AD *Gujari*, 4: 4). This heart is freed when it meets the true Guru; . . by his word the glamour of worldliness is burned up, . . . egoism comes out when washed (by him) (AD. *Basantu*, 16 3-4, 17. 1) The water (of life) is obtained through the Guru's word when the ego has been driven out (AD *Malar Ki Var*, 12 Sl 2); (the heart) becomes clean, and then the True One is found (N *Asa di Var*, 16 Sl 2) If (a man) meets such a true Guru, he will entrust (his) head to him,[2] and (then) selfhood departs from within, the Owner of the soul meets him, God comes and continually dwells in (his) heart (AD *Anand*, 30: 3-4)

2 The restless heart runs off in the ten directions, (but) it can be stopped (and made) motionless (T *Dhanasari*, 3 2), today **God** can be met on restraining the feelings which disturb the heart (F *Asa*, 2· 1). Think (of God) in your heart again and again, and the affection for worldliness will pass away.

[1] *i e* God is found when the Guru has purged the heart of its egoism.

[2] *i e* , devote his life to him

The immortal God is with you; O my mind, plunge into the love of God[1] (Ar. *Gauri Ashtapadi*, 6: 14)! Without the power of a perfect love for the Master,[2] who has won the noble God[3] (G. *Akal Ustat*, 245)?

3. Law Codes and Scriptures define merit and sin,[4] but do not know the essence of Reality . in the absence of the Guru . . . The world is sleeping in the delusion of Nature, it passes the (whole) night asleep[5] By the Guru's kindness those persons wake who let God dwell in (their) heart and utter (His) nectar hymns Nanak says· He obtains the Reality who day and night turns lovingly to God and passes the night in wakefulness[6] (AD *Anand*, 27)!

4. The Immaculate is in your very bosom, yet you grow desperate in seeking (Him) elsewhere (T *Sorathi*, 3: 2)! Why leave Him

[1] *racu Rāma ke rangi*

[2] *lit* husband, lord (*pati*)

[3] *Padamāpata*, *i e*, Lakshmi's Lord, Vishnu, who is God

[4] *simriti sāstra punna pāpa bicārade*, *cf* § 62 1, 62 3, GN 4 2, GH 9 2).

[5] The metaphor of sleep runs back far in religious history (cf GH 8 2)

[6] For vigils of prayer, cf GI 96 2 and GZ 31 1

who stays near in (your) bosom and go far away? You shall find close at hand Him for whom you search the world (K *Bawan Akhari*, 16), (for) He is naturally nearer (than your) hands and feet (Rd. *Sorathi*, 1: 4), the Soul of soul in all, ever pervading every breast By the Guru's grace He is manifested even at home, and (there also) spontaneously pervades (everything) . Then, Nanak, the burning is extinguished (N *Malar Ashtapadi*, 1: 7-8). As fragrance resides in the flower, as the reflection (is) in a mirror,[1] so also God dwells within; seek in the bosom itself, (my) brother (T *Dhanasari*, 1: 1)! He is mad who does not recognise (himself)[2]; when he realises the self, then he knows the One (K *Bilawal*, 2: 4)

5 One day I was going to worship God in a temple,[3] but the Guru explained (that) God is in (my) very heart (Ra *Basantu*, 1· 1). God is won by loving the true Guru (N *Sorathi*, 7. 4), now that I have met (Him) by means of the Guru's affection

[1] *Cf* the striking Gnostic saying in GMC 69 2

[2] Ramana Maharshi said "What, was there ever a time when you did not know yourself?"

[3] *lit* in a (certain) place, *ek a dinasa* *pūjana cālī brahama thāi*

and love, we shall not be separated (again) (AD. *Suhi X*, 1: 14). *Why send for pen and ink? Write in your heart If you remain always in the love of God, your affection shall never be broken off from Him Pens and ink-bottle will perish, the writing will go with them, O Nanak, but the love of the True One which He grants from the beginning shall not perish* (2: 70 AD)

6 Serve God, do no other service; from the service of God is gained the fruit anxiously (desired by) the heart; in any other service life passes in vain (AD *Gujari*, 2· 1) Some have chains on the necks as they are led off to prison, (but) they are freed from bonds (when) they really recognise the True One (N *Malai ki Var*, 21) The Light is in all; now Thou art met thereby (but) beautified by love [1] (N *Suhi Chhant*, 3· 1)! Love pleases the Beloved (N. *Malar Ashtapadi*, 1· 1)!

7 Easily shall the disciples who please God in the heart be united to God. The Beloved dwells in present and future, say in what way (He) can be won (today) (AD.

[1] M translates by it Thou art known, but Thou art found by love

Gauri, 17: 1)! By fear (and) love, by the offering (of) devotion day and night, the soul sees God ever present (AD *Sri*, 21. 2), when the Name (once) dwells in the bosom, (then) the Beloved is (soon) met by the Guru's teaching (AD *Gauri Chhant*, 4. 2). Having spread the Word abroad, (God) causes (you) to meet Himself in the Guru, having revered [1] the True One (in him) (N *Malar ki Var*, 2), you repeat the (Name of) the Immaculate and cling (to Him), O heart (N *Gauri*, 15· 4); God Himself then closely embraces (you) (R *Gauri Karahale*, 1 9)

8 The True One unites (you) to Himself and then delights (your) heart and enfolds in (His) embrace (the one who) walks according to (His) pleasure (N *Asa Ashtapadi*, 17. 2) Nanak, the disciple is (as) easily united (with God) as water mixes with water (R *Basantu*, 9: 8), it is the Immaculate, the Invisible, who Himself unites (man) with Himself (AD. *Gauri*, 17 1). (My) heart has reverenced (Him), so I have known God (*K Sorathi*, 11 4).

God is not found by reasoning or logical argument, but through the "crucifixion" or "abandonment" of the

[1] *or*, obeyed

ego, which the soul can reach when inspired by the presence and teaching of the Guru This is a baptismal flood which washes away the stain of selfishness, purifies the heart, and so enables it to give a home to Immaculate Divinity

The heart and mind run here and there away from their real happiness (*Gita* 6 35), but they can be brought under control and fixed in God If they once taste His nectar, ah, then they can never be lured away from Him again—can the drunkard leave his glass undrained? Deeper and yet more deep the heart will dive into that nectar ocean of God's love, finding in it its own fulfilment, its perfect joy and peace after the restlessness of ages Doctrine and Ethics can tell us what to believe and what to do, the Scriptures are our guide for actions in the outer world, but who can guide the heart in its deeper diving into God? It is His love that guides and draws on the heart, that reveals to it all Himself, planting in it the tree of a passionate attachment to His feet

Where is He, that we may find Him? Shall we search the deserts, build palm-leaf shelters on the bank of great rivers, crouch in ice-girt caves upon the lofty mountains of the earth? Is He found by wandering through the markets of distant lands, by holy pilgrimages, by dreadful austerities? Nay, He is at our very side, within that very heart which throbs so restlessly in its yearning, and He smiles out of the eyes of everyone we see Dive deep, then, my brother, within that little heart of yours, that heart which trembles in desire and disappointment, which longs for perfect friendship, for the fullest understanding love! There He dwells, and there He can be found in lonely silences, by the sounding seas, on the wind-swept hill, amid the endless toil of domesticity

Who is that Self within, whom we feel astir in the silent hours? Who asks this question of himself? Seeing

that self, that "I", we see the very Self of self, the "I" of every "I", the God within, from whom all things have come and in whose arms all things are held

To love that Self, to serve that Self—ah, this alone can make our toilsome life worth having! Those who never drink that nectar of God's Life have really lived in vain, they cannot hope for freedom from ignorance and sorrow And that nectar comes to us in the Guru's Chalice, to serve him, the saint, the child of God, is to serve God Himself, to love him is to win God's love, which will never fail the heart that longs for Him And he who wins God's love unites with Him, and never never again for a moment can he be separated from that Infinite Source of bliss He blends inseparably with God, like "the dewdrop in the shining sea", and yet remains the dewdrop for ever mingled with the eternal waters

44. Intense Yearning for Him

1. Happy night, grow long, that I may fasten (my) love upon the Beloved![1] Be brief, O wretched sleep, that I may ever touch (His) feet! I am always longing for the dust (of His) feet and begging for the Name for love (of which I have) left the world![2] Filled with love for the Beloved and spontaneously

[1] This recalls the wonderful duet by Tristan and Isolde in Wagner's great opera beginning " O sink hernieder " It is in the " night ", when senses close to this outer illusory world, that the soul communes with the Inner God and realises Him in love cf GP 66 1

[2] *jācau nāma rasi bairāgani*

inebriated,[1] I have given up great follies, when I met the Beloved on the Straight[2] Path He took (my) arm and I was drenched with love Nanak humbly begs: "Graciously let me remain clinging to (Thy) feet" (Ar *Bihagale Chhant*, 4: 1)!

2 I am Thine, Thou mine[3] (AD *Suhi Chhant*. 1. 3)! Those who have obtained God do not wander about again and again[4] (K *Maru*, 3· 1), (so) if Thou be our Friend, do not for a moment[5] be separate (from us) Thou hast fascinated my soul; when shall I behold Thee, my Life (Ar *Maru ki Vai*, 2 Sl 1)? Without (my) Beloved I shall pine to death (K. *Maru Kafi*, 1: 2), and on seeing Thee I shall blossom (like) the lotus (Ar *Asa*, 74: 2).

3 Foolish Nanak has become mad after the King, **he** knows no one but God. When one has gone mad with awe (of God), then he

[1] *pria rangi rātī sahaja mātī*

[2] *lit* true

[3] *hau terā tū hamārā* This is a typical example of the extreme economy of words common to all the Gurus; those who know speak little, those who know not babble much!

[4] This is the aim of birth; when it is achieved, how can rebirth occur?

[5] *lit*· a dawn (*hika bhorī*)

is considered insane; when he knows no other second beyond the One Master, then he is deemed mad when he does (this) one thing But when he recognises the Master's will, in what else is the perfection of cleverness?[1] Then is he thought mad when he holds the Master dear and deems himself unworthy[2] and the rest of the world good (N *Maru*, 7·1-4) (But) what care I for the world so long as I please Thee (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 21·1)?

4. If Thou give happiness, then I adore Thee, even (in) misery I brood on Thee! . If Thou seat (me) near (to Thee), then I adore Thee, even if Thou strike and repulse me, yet will I ponder (Thee)! If the world praise, then (am I) like Thee, and if it blame, then I cannot leave (Thee)[3]! Poor Nanak has become mad after a sight of Thee, O God (R *Suhi Ashtapadi*, 1 2, 8-9, 12)! The pain has become (a very) dying! . Say how (there can be) sleep or hunger without God, raiment

[1] *dūjī avara siānapa kāi*

[2] *lit* bad (*mandā*)

[3] I am like God in receiving the praise of His world, if criticism or hate come instead, then to whom can I go for comfort save to Him?

does not console the body, without God how can happiness be attained (N. *Barah Maha*, 9-10)? Various people have various (friends, but) I have only Thee; why do I not die of weeping when Thou comest not into mind (A. *Suhi ki Var*, 20 Sl 1)?

5. Within (me was) a thirst for the Name of God (R *Sri*, 3: 1), crying "Beloved, Beloved!" I wandered over the whole world, but my thirst did not go Nanak, my thirst departed when I met the true Guru; on returning home I obtained the Beloved (AD. *Bihagale ki Var*, 13 Sl 2). (Yes), when I returned after climbing the mountain in search (of God), I found (Him) in the strong Castle[1] which He had fortified (K. *Bawan Akhari*, 20) (God). Thou art one in every place (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 13: 8)! God's Name is nectar, the thirst of him who drinks (it) goes away; . . Nanak, disciples who drink (that nectar) their thirst does not return (AD. *Malar ki Var*, 11 Sl 1)!

6 When the Name is found the heart is satisfied; accursed are beings without the

[1] The "castle" is of course the heart, cf St Teresa's metaphor in her wonderful study of mysticism, *The Interior Castle*

Name[1] (R. *Sri*, 2: 1)! My friends and companions, let us stay clinging to the feet of the Lord; in our hearts there is intense love for the Beloved, let us (now) ask for devotion to God[2] (Ar *Bihagale Chhant*, 4: 2). When we were bound with the noose of worldly glamour, we tied Thee with a bond of love Make attempts to free Thyself, (Beloved); we got free by adoring Thee! O God, Thou knowest our mutual relationship, now what wilt Thou do with us[3] (Rd *Sorathi*, 2. 1)?

Nanak prays that the mystic "night" of God's felt presence, when all distractions are forgotten, may be longer and longer, and that less and less time be spent in the sleep of forgetfulness of Him amid life's business. He has once tasted that sweetness of God and for His sake turned away from the world's delights, now he would for evermore be free to abide in Him His love is indeed delightful and all-satisfying, so intense and delicious that Nanak cannot for a moment bear to be left alone without his Love He has become mad with love because he can think of, see, hear, feel nothing any more but God in everything and now devotes his whole life solely to His service Though his true humility ever increases, he has no care for the world's opinion, being absorbed in pleasing his Beloved

Whether God sends him joy or sorrow, honour or disgrace, he will always cling to Him with faithful love.

[1] This is not a curse but a mere statement of fact

[2] We already love, now let us serve and eternally adore Him

[3] So M *Mādhave jānata hohu jaisī taisī aba kahā karohu ge aisī*

Why is this? If God escapes from him even for a moment he will die in misery, God is his only hope and consolation How then can he let Him go?

Long ago he wandered here and there vainly seeking that Beloved and crying aloud in his anguish Only when he met the saint who was to be his Guru did he learn that such outward search is futile, for the Beloved of each soul dwells in his very home, in the heart There, then, he sought, and found He drank deep of that divine nectar, and with the living draught of God his agelong thirst was quenched And now he challenges God to try to escape from his clinging arms; the devotee has enslaved his Master, tied Him with the unbreakable cords of love and adoration. What can God do but give the fullness of His infinite love in return?

CHAPTER SEVEN

UNION WITH THE BELOVED

One of the Guru's favourite themes is the Spiritual Courtship and Marriage of the soul with God—a theme full of unfathomable deeps of meaning which can be even partly grasped only by those who are on the Mystic Path. It is an ancient theme, and in the Near East along one of its Babylonian lines can be traced back to the story of Tammuz. The Sufis speak this language; so do the Vaishnavas, so do many Catholic saints; and so from age to age have certain of God's chosen "brides" sung this immortal song in words of thrilling warmth and ecstasy. St Teresa of Avila, the writers of the *Odes of Solomon* and the Manichean Psalms, Sri Jayadeva, Rabia and Andal, Mira and Hafiz are among those who spoke this mystic language and enriched our world-literature with gems of devotion. But no recognized scripture in the world so lingers on this theme as the *Guru Granth Sahib*, which lovingly recurs to it from time to time throughout its many pages.

Here too a prolonged study would let us trace the various stages of the mystic path outlined by the great Mystics of East and West, with their alternation of ecstasy and "dark nights of the soul", but I have made no such attempt in this volume, tracing rather the

simple progress from a burning thirst for God, to the soul's adornment with His graces, the Guru's intercession, the coming of the Beloved, and the endless bliss of perfect union

45. The Beloved is Near

Having established the nine houses, the highest house, the Palace,[1] (is where) God dwells in His own home (N. *Barah Maha*, 2). He is near, do not think (Him) far away; (He) ever cares for and remembers (you) (N. *Gujari*, 1: 4). The Spouse is near at hand, O foolish woman; what are you seeking outside (N. *Tilang*, 4: 1)? by seeking outside one is ruined[2] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 15: 4). Infatuated by the glamour (of worldliness) one thinks He is distant but, Nanak says, He is always present (Ar. *Gauri Cheti*, 1: 4), the Reality is in the house (itself); the self-willed miss it through egoism, the disciple gets it at once (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 15: 4). Where can

[1] Beyond the "nine houses" of creation is the "tenth door of the sky" (§ 39 5) which leads to the "palace" or "bed-chamber" of the Spouse, the King of Heaven So too St Teresa's "seventh mansion", where the Divine Lover waits His bride, is beyond six "courts" or "mansions" to be crossed by her in turn on her inward way

[2] It is indeed ruin for the bride to retrace her steps and to turn outwards to the "world" she has already left behind

one go (to be) far from Him[1] (Ar *Sukhmani*, 22 7)?

The senses speak to us only of this "unreal" world, for they can neither hear nor see nor touch the living God, so we often forget how very near He is to each of us and, driven by our spiritual need, look for Him in all manner of places outside ourselves The lover may be reminded here that her Spouse is already at her side, she has only to clarify her vision and she will see Him there When the sense of separation wears thin, the dimness over her eyes will go, and she will see her Lord

46. The Bride Longs for Him

1. For the bride the night is tedious; sleep does not come, (her) woman's soul pines away through grief, (saying) "How can (my) eyes see (Him) (N *Gauri Purbi Chhant*, 1: 1)? In every house the Spouse enjoys a happy wife, why have I been forgotten by the Bridegroom" (N *Barah Maha*, 4)? (My) eyelids do not close;[2] I am steeped in love for the Dear One, and (my) heart looks ceaselessly in anxiety for the Lord (Ar *Asa Chhant*, 14 2) I have (grown) crazy in the agony of separation

[1] This recalls the Psalmist's cry of exultation "If I ascend to Heaven, Thou art there, if I go down to the underworld, there art Thou also!"

[2] *palaka na lāgai*

from my Beloved" (F. *Suhi*, 1: 2). Continuously she walks about burning,[1] day and night enduring great pain without the Beloved (AD *Majh Ashtapadi*, 4: 2).

2 The woman is waiting for (Thy coming on the) path; listen, O Divine Spirit![2] . . (She cries.) "Why does Thou not come (N. *Barah Maha*, 1, 14)? Wandering here and there I weep and wring (my) hands[3] (Ar. *Asa*, 15: 3)! Save for God, to whom can I tell my agony (F. *Sloka* 10)? My heart greatly yearns for the sight of God like a thirsty man without water (R. *Gond*, 6: 1); it is impossible to remain without a sight of God. I have not (yet) tasted love; my thirst is not (yet) quenched; (my) girlhood has gone, and I mourn.[4] Now also I awoke thirsty with hope, yet I have been disappointed and (now) remain without expectation (N. *Asa*, 26: 3-4). I am wandering in search of that dear charming Darling, show Him, (my) dear! I will

[1] *anadinu jaladī phirai*, the word "burning" is apt: this is the real *tapasya* of spiritual life; no futile self-torturings deserve the name.

[2] *ātmārāma*

[3] *bhrami bhrami rovai hātha pacholai*

[4] *gayā su jobanu dhana pachatānī*

give my head for you—give a sight (of Him if only) for a very little while![1] My eyes are swimming[2] with the love of (that) Dear One, they cannot be still even for a moment[3] (Ar. *Jaitsari Chhant*, 1: 1)!

3 "Standing in my house I long for Thee; in my heart is an excessive eagerness; (N *Suhi Chhant*, 3: 1) (If) anyone comes and lets (me) meet my dear Beloved, I will sell myself to him (as a slave) (R. *Suhi Ashtapadi II*, 1: 1)! In my heart and body is fixed a longing for God (R *Gujari*, 4: 2), (for) without (my) dear God I cannot play the (game of) love (R *Asa Chhant*, 14. 6)" (When) the Beloved does not come to (her) house, how can the wife find happiness? (Her) body wastes away from the anguish of separation[4] (N *Barah Maha*, 5).

4 God's arrow of love has pierced my heart; my suffering God the Lord (alone) knows the pain within my heart (R *Gond*, 6 1); the one whom the Beloved's arrow has

[1] *lit* for a dawn, the actual moment of dawn in the tropics is very brief

[2] *or* inundated, drenched, *naina hamāre pria rangā rangāre*

[3] *tilu, i e*, a very tiny seed

[4] *birahi, i e*, Skt *virāham*

smitten knows the burning agony (of it)[1] (R *Asa Chhant*, 8: 2) (Now) I cannot remain without seeing my Beloved; separation from God is a weight within me (R. *Gauri*, 29: 3)! I would lay (my) heart before any who pleased my Darling (Ar. *Jaitsari Chhant*, 1: 2), (for) none seems to me like the Beloved (Ar. *Asa Chhant*, 4. 4). O friend, I love my Beloved, (but) He cares not at all (for me) (Ar. *Jaitsari Chhant*, 1. 3)! The one prayer (I use) is for devotion to God (R *Asa Chhant*, 8: 3), and that I may remain in contact with my Beloved and hold Him pressed (to me) in (my) bosom (AD *Sri Rag di Var*, 19 Sl. 1)!

The young bride mourns that she alone is left unvisited by God while all her comrades enjoy His love Life without Him is dark misery, she does not know how to live through the long " dark night ", filled as she is with a burning thirst for Him whom she so feverishly awaits She has no real friend to whom she can expose her grief, for who can understand love's sorrows who have not been smitten with its arrows? She is desperate with longing, and roams about like a wild thing caged, ready to die even for a mere fleeting glimpse of Him, and then she stands eager at the door,

[1] Cf Mira's song

" Only the wounded know the anguished pain
When one is wounded sorely to the heart,
None but the Lord Himself can save me now! "

looking out along the path by which He will come at last to her, hearing His step in every crackling twig.

She knows her life was made for Him, her body exists solely to give Him its delight, her heart's only work is to give itself to Him—and yet He comes not to her heart and leaves her fruitless Youth is meant for love, but her youth passes in barrenness and grief Again and again her hopes leap up as she imagines He has come at last, and then are dashed once more down into despair to find herself mistaken She knows it useless to tell another of her woe, for He alone can understand her heart who made it for Himself, and in His absence she must endure the very agonies of death unconsoled Yet in the midst of her anguish she asks but one thing—for more and more of this agonising bliss of love for God, so that in her heart at least she may embrace Him constantly and hourly draw nearer to the culminating meeting of full union

This most beautiful section, so full of passionate feeling, recalls strongly to the mind the throbbing words of Sri Jayadeva in his immortal *Gita Govinda*, the cry of St Gemma Galgani is in the same key "When, oh when shall I see Thee face to face? . Make haste, Jesus, oh, dost Thou not see how this heart longs for Thee? . Does it not pain Thee, Lord, to see it thus languish in desire? Come, come, Jesus, make haste, come near, let me hear Thy voice Oh God, when shall my whole being be satiated with Thy light, oh when? I thirst for Thee, Jesus Dost Thou not see how I suffer? These flames of love consume my body as well as my heart, and I shall be reduced to ashes!" Yes, the Mystics speak one common language. Is there any Tamil Vaishnava who will not now remember Nammālwār's glowing cry for the consoling presence of his Beloved?

47. It is He who Calls and Adorns Her

1. Sleeping on a dark night,[1] how can you pass the night without the Beloved? (Your) bosom burns, (your) body is burning, (your) heart and property (?) [2] burn away as sacrifice.[3] When a woman does not enjoy the Spouse, then (her) youth goes in vain; (her) Spouse (may be) on the couch, (but His) wife is unaware (of it) (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2: 7-8) The virtuous one enjoys (Him by practice of her) virtue (N. *Barah Maha*, 13); Nanak, when the young girl pleases (her) Husband, He will Himself enjoy (her company) (N *Tilang*, 3: 4).

2 (She says:) "I may put on many dresses, but without the Beloved I can win no place in the (bride-)chamber When I am desired by the Beloved I adorn myself with necklaces, pearls, scents, silks (and) satins (N. *Barah Maha*, 16), (nay), He Himself decks, Himself colours, (and) He Himself gives a

[1] *nisi andhiarī sutīe* M translates "You who are reckless ", but I find no such use for the word *sutīe* elsewhere The meaning seems clear, and is common to nearly all Mystics

[2] *dhanu* M translates "O woman", as from the word *dhana*

[3] *jali bali jāi*

look of gracious approval[1] (N. *Tilang*, 3.4). (Beloved,) Thy Name alone is the madder that dyes my robe—the colour remains ever fast (N *Suhi*, 4: 2)! I will wear a flower garland as a necklace round the throat; (when) I meet the Beloved, then shall I make (this) adornment (N. *Asa*, 34: 2)! Hear, beloved Lord, (with Thy) virtues in (my) fair bosom I please Thee (and) bathe in (Thy) tank! . Having become pure, I have come to know the holy bathing-place within[2] (N. *Barah Maha*, 15)"

3 (When) the lovely bride[3] pleases Thee, Thou adornest her with Thy grace adorned with the Guru's Word, she belongs body and heart to[4] the Beloved (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2: 1-2) Nanak, that woman meets (Him) when caused to meet (Him), without the Beloved no sleep comes (to her) The bride's soul is unhonoured without her dear lord: how can she get happiness without holding (Him) in embrace (N *Gauri Purbi Chhant*, 1 1-2)? She

[1] Nothing we may do of ourselves can win His favour, when He has adorned us with His own graces He can approve of us and take us to Himself

[2] *tirthu antari* i e, "the sanctuary of the heart", bathing in the Name, and so loving God in the heart

[3] *sohagani*

[4] *or* sits close to (*pira kai pāsi*).

easily gets comfort in the mind if the girl wins God (as her) Bridegroom in the home (N *Barah Maha*, 5)! She has all His prudence and ornaments of peerless beauty, O Nanak, that happy wife who is pleasing the Creator (Ar *Asa*, 118: 4).

4. (She says:) "I sleep, the Beloved is awake[1]—to whom shall I go to ask (what to do)[2] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2· 8)? I have searched the four corners (of the world, but) few friends (are) mine;[3] if it please Thee, Master,[4] Thou (art) mine, I Thine[4] (N. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 14. 1)" All are God's handmaids and all say, "(He is) mine!" Nanak, it is the one whom He has adorned whom He lets abide in happiness (Ar *Asa*, 117: 4). Some **He** takes to meet (Himself), others **He** allows to stray away from **Himself**[5] (N. *Asa di Var*, 11); he is known (as) a disciple to whom He reveals Himself (A *Asa di Var*, 2 Sl 3) Dear friend, (if you merely) go, how can there be a meeting? If you are adorned with virtue, then

[1] *hau suti pira jagatā*

[2] *or* consult

[3] M prefers "I found no friend"

[4] *je tudhu bhavai sahiba tū mai hau taidā*

[5] The text has this in the second person Thou, etc

He will meet (you), and when there has been a meeting He will not part (from you again), if He have (really) met (you)[1] (N. *Suhi*, 4: 2-3).

Her friend pities her misery, for she too remembers when she suffered likewise before the Bridegroom came to her, she warns her also that she must remain alert lest He come and find her sleeping, unaware, and pass on His way again The unhappy girl replies that she has begun with the Guru's aid to learn how to find Him within her heart, and that the very sleep against which her friend has warned her is His gift and could not come to her but from His hand.

She goes on to tell how God comes to her in that sleep and decks her, all unseen, with His own virtues so that she may please Him and win His love, for nothing she can do of herself can satisfy His perfection Hope now surges in her heart, for she knows how beautiful she is becoming under His adorning hand, and she resolves to go forth to meet Him in all the graces He has given her through the Guru's teaching

It is true that all God's children have equal claims upon Him, but He draws into the intimacy of perfect communion only those whom He Himself has beautified with virtue, to whom He has revealed Himself as the source of all goodness and all beauty And He will never let go of those whom He has thus drawn to Himself and favoured with His glance

[1] The word " meeting " does not imply merely the outer contact, but rather a close and intimate union Once united with God, the soul does not slip away from Him again

48. How to Win His Love

1 If a woman become gentle[1] and if she become (like) a thread, she shall take and string in the mind a jewel[2] of inestimable worth (N. *Wadhans*, 2: 2). Having dropped egoism, let her adorn herself (thus) . with fear and love, (and) then shall the Spouse enjoy (His) young wife on the couch Nanak, then will she please (her) Husband's heart and leaving (self)-importance[3] be united with her Master (N. *Asa*, 26: 4). Women adorned with love for the dear person cannot be held back from offering devotion (to Him) day and night, (their) dwelling (will be) in (His) bride-chamber[4] made ready by the Word They will make prayer (their) service to the True One and (so) be beautiful walking straight beside the Master according to (His) will (N *Majh ki Var*, 22)

[1] M translates "virtuous" (*karanī*)

[2] This is the mystic "Pearl" of the Gnosis (cf GJ 31 6), God's heart.

[3] *chodi vadāī*

[4] *mahala manjhi nivasu* Cf Manichean *Psalms* 'Take me into Thy bride-chambers that I may chant with them that sing to Thee"

2. She walks so as to please the Spouse and (so) always enjoys (His) embrace (AD *Malar ki Var*, 6 Sl. 1), O Spouse, if she only remains attached to Thee, then the bride will enjoy (Thee) (N. *Wadhans*, 2·4). Nanak, blessed is the happy wife who loves (her) husband (Ar *Sri*, 23:4)! My Beloved is playful;[1] (when) a woman has intense affection for the Beloved, (He is) kind (to her) with delight and love (N. *Asa Chhant*, 1: 1). That woman is very dear (to Him) in (whose) heart there is devotion for the Beloved, Nanak, the All-Blissful delightedly enjoys the love of her who has a loving friendship for God[2]. . (When she) knows Him by (His) grace, she meets and is absorbed in (His) glories (N. *Barah Maha*, 13-14, 7)

The soul who would win God's love must make herself so small that she is like a slender thread on which to thread His heart, so that he may wear it on her breast All the coarseness of the ego must be refined away and the spirit become subtle (*tanumānasī*), so that she may capture Him and hold Him fast Then she will find Him in her arms, and there will be no more hindrance to her perfect enjoyment of His love Day and night will then be filled with exquisite delight

[1] *ralīālā*, i e , delightful, full of love's sweet ways

[2] *Hari siu priti sancho.*

as she blends her person with that of her Beloved so long desired

Ever watchful of His pleasure, she does all to please Him and remains always obedient at His feet like the perfect wife, He in His turn lavishes on her the richest affection of His heart, for none can be so dear to Him as the perfect devotee who is filled with reverent love

49. A Virtuous Bride's Joy

1. She who is dear to her Spouse is a happy wife (N. *Tilang*, 4. 4); through the Beloved's affection and love she is the beautiful Queen of all (AD. *Asa Ashtapadi*, 8: 4); beautiful, fair of form [1] (and) accomplished, it is she who is called "Clever" (N *Tilang*, 4: 4). With both hands folded she stands and utters sincere prayer, [2] in love with the Darling, she dwells in awe of the True One, imbued with love, she delights in bliss [3] She is called the handmaid of the Dear One and answers to the name of Darling [4] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2: 2-3), thus she is saturated with

[1] *or* nature (*sarūpa*)

[2] *sacu kahai aradāsi*

[3] A line full of music *lāli ratī saca bhai vasi bhāi ratī rangī rāsi* Besides their supreme spiritual genius the Gurus have a wonderful gift of poetry

[4] *Lālī*

love-bliss, intoxicated with intimacy, night and day immersed in love (N *Tilang*, 4: 4). (Her) true love is not interrupted, and the True One brings about close union (with her) [1] (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2· 3)

2. (Her) heart is filled, drenched with the Word—I ever surrende to her! Such a woman will never end up as [2] a widow if she be assimilated to [3] the true Guru; her Beloved (will be) a source of bliss (ever) new and constant [4] bodily—He neither comes nor goes, but always delights in the true happy wife who obeys (His mere) glance The woman makes truth the parting (of her hair), love (her) dress and ornaments, the implanting of (God) in the mind (her fragrant) sandalwood,

[1] The bliss of this "meeting" is well paralleled in the Manichean *Psalms* "Christ my Bridegroom has taken me to His bride-chamber, I have rested with Him in the land of the immortals" St. Gemma is in a like mood "As long as I had so many desires my soul was without rest, now that I have only one I am happy. Here, Jesus, here in my heart I will raise Thee a pavilion of love Thou alone must enter into it I will keep Thee always with me, always here a prisoner I am awaiting the grace to be entirely transformed into Him, and I am consumed by the desire to be able to plunge into the infinite abyss of Divine Love . . I would wish to be all dis olved in the midst of the flames of Thy love! " Western mystics almost all speak thus

[2] *lit*· sit down as.

[3] *or* intent upon

[4] *lit* true, *i e* reliable God is always there with His lover, even physically present, though invisible

the tenth gate (her) abode Having kindled the lamp with the word, (she wears) the Name of God as a garland on the breast; fairest among women, (she wears) on the brow the jewel of love, (her) beauty and intelligence are attractive (and she is) unequalled in (her) true love [1] She knows no man save the Beloved; (her) affection and love are for the true Guru (alone) (N *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2: 3-6).

3. Lowering clouds have spread and rain has delighted (all), love makes (me) happy in heart and body, Nanak, nectar words rain down, and the (Beloved) comes graciously into (my) house (N. *Barah Maha*, 4)! At the meeting (my) friends asked, "What is the Spouse like?" [2] (but) being filled with the sweetness of love I could not say anything (Ar. *Asa Chhant*, 10: 3)! He graciously came to my house; then (my) girl friends met and arranged for the marriage; [3] as I watched the play, bliss came into (my) heart, the Bridegroom came to wed (me) (N *Asa*, 10: 1)!

[1] The full esoteric significance of this beautiful description of the Bride adorned for her Spouse would take many pages to expound

[2] *Cf* *Canticles* 5. 9, an almost exact parallel

[3] So M reads *kaju*

When He embraced (me) [1] sorrows fled away (and my) life, heart, body all bloomed anew [2] (Ar. *Āsa Chhant*, 10. 2)! (My friends,) having left all (other) maidens the Beloved (is now) my Lover (Ar. *Suhı*, 4: 3)! Sing, sing, O maidens, with wisdom and thought! To my house has come the Life of the World (as) bridegroom, ever since my marriage came about through the Guru, whenever I met the Bridegroom then I knew (Him whose) Word is pervading the three worlds (N *Āsa* 10· 1-2) The Dear One has come near and set (me) on the couch, I no longer listen to what others say (Ar *Āsa*, 55: 2)

4 So long as the "I" existed then Thou (wast) not, now Thou (art) and "I" (am) not [3] (Rd *Soıathı*, 1. 1)! Egoism has gone, and the heart rejoices (N *Āsa*, 10· 2) Thou (art) the jewel of a very profound deep (sea); [4] Thou the Beloved, I the Bride (Ar *Suhı Chhant*, 4: 2)! Thou art indeed love-bliss,[5] Thou art glory, Thou art beauty, Thou art

[1] *anga sangı lāge, lıt* limbs pressed together, or the like

[2] *lıt* became green

[3] *jaba hama hote taba tū nāhī aba tū hī maı nāhī* *cf* GP 28 1

[4] *or* a very deep and profound jewel

[5] *or* delight

love! . . . Nanak, He is the nearest of the near (Ar *Gauri*, 156: 1, 3)! Thou, (O God, art) in my heart (Ar. *Asa*, 30. 1)! Sing God's sweet praises, (O my) life, sing thou the sweet praises of God! . . Come, my beloved God, night and day with every breath I meditate (on Thee) (Ar *Gauri*, 172:1, 167:1)! Paying no heed at all to my merits and defects, Thou hast in a moment pardoned (me) (Ar *Wadhans Chhant*, 1. 4)!

5 Nanak, that is the (real) gift which comes to us (when) the Master is pleased (A *Asa di Var*, 23 Sl 1); He arranges His own affairs, there is no one else to do it—which affairs are (the giving of) truth, contentment, kindness and faith, a few disciples will understand [1] Nanak suggests: He is the one Beloved of all, she on whom He looks graciously becomes (His) happy wife (N. *Asa*, 10: 3-4).

Now all her sorrows flee away, for she is His chosen bride blessed abundantly with the permission to stand at His side, ready always to give Him little services and to utter from time to time her little cries of love and need In His near presence she acquires

[1] It is only those who try to live the life of a true Sikh or disciple who can understand the nature of God's gifts of those virtues which beautify the soul for Him

more and more of beauty and of all good gifts, His intimacy a ceaseless source of blissful union with Him.

Never can such a bride lose her eternal Spouse, for her whole heart is ever overflowing with requited love and with joy in her own opportunity for instant and glad obedience at her Beloved's slightest wish. The Beloved dwells now on her very bosom and covers her with His own infinite loveliness, so that He delights in her as she in Him; knowing how utterly she is His, He gives Himself as utterly to her. How can she tell another of the charms of that Darling of her heart? Those who know love for themselves will know His charms who Himself is Love, but others cannot learn from words. They must taste the honey for themselves to know what sweetness is. So great is her joy in Him that she is silent now upon His loveliness and can only exclaim in rapture how He has come at last to her as Spouse. In His embrace she has forgotten the long agony of loneliness, the Guru brought about that meeting, and now the two are one. What more can she say? Even her ears cannot hear their questions, for she is already lost in bliss!

She knows only that this blessed union arose when she so forgot herself as to see only Him, so long as she thought of her own misery she had no room in her heart for Him, but when she remembered only Him she found Him at her side, in her arms, and knew Him to be her all in all. And now her joy bursts forth in rapturous jubilation, she calls on all to share her ecstasy by joining in her adoration of her beloved Lord. Stepping in His infinite condescension into her lowly cottage, He has raised her to His couch and filled her with songs of bliss. None could do this but He, no friend could bring about this perfect "marriage of the soul," for the Guru who arranged it all was himself but the Bridegroom in disguise. And now the humble village girl has become a Queen, the Queen of Heaven.

50. The Spiritual Marriage

1. I will take a fan and wave it over (my) Dear,[1] (for) . the Spouse has taken me and made (me) Queen . What do I know of how I have pleased the Spouse (even though) I am helpless, poor and unhonoured (Ar *Asa*, 95, 2-3) I will prepare the bridal tent of reality[2] in the lotus of my heart (K *Asa*, 24: 1), the Lord fulfils (my) desire who have sought shelter with the true Guru (R *Gujari*, 4: 2). I was stricken with hunger for God, (and now) my heart is satisfied with God's Name; God is my relative and will at the last be (my) Friend (AD. *Gujari*, 2·2). God the King is (indeed) my true Friend; the Guru met (me) and my heart revived, the hopes in my heart and body were fulfilled . . When I met God, the heart expanded (R. *Gauri* 29: 3). (My) Dear . . has taken away the burning of my heart, it is well (that) I have obeyed the saying of (my) Dear (Ar *Asa*, 95: 1) (Now) have I obtained my Beloved, and I have made (my dress of) red

[1] *le pakhā pria jhalau pāe*

[2] *tata barāti*

colour[1] (because) we friends have met after so very long a time (Ar. *Asa Chhant*, 4: 4).

2. Nanak, having taught (me) love, the true Guru has caused (me) to meet (God) and I dwell in (His) fear (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 2: 8); the Beloved is unchangeably dear to me, steady and clever, the wise Arranger,[2] (while) the whole world is fickle. . Nanak, my Guru has brought (me) into union (with God), I a (mere) girl have obtained the Spouse in (my) home (N *Barah Maha*, 13, 16)! Nanak, God is my Friend, I am not of the world[3] (N. *Asa Chhant*, 1. 4)! God is my love and standard,[4] God is the (only) subject of my talk! By the Guru's grace my heart is drenched with love—thus is (my) service repaid (AD. *Gujari*, 2: 1)! (My) eyes are wet with God's nectar and (my) heart is dyed with the love of God the King (R. *Asa Chhant*, 8: 1)!

Queen of Heaven! Bride of God! This is the destiny of every human soul, once freed from the heavy clouds of egoism and filled with the love of the adorable

[1] Red is an auspicious colour for marriages, much used in North India, of course it here has no reference to the orange robes of renunciation.

[2] *or* Creator (*bidhātā*).

[3] *Thākura mīta hamāre, hama nāhī lokāne*

[4] *or* rule of life (*rīti*)

Lord of all And now she delights in His service while ever wondering at His measureless condescension which has raised her to His arms She was lowly, unknown and miserable, crying in the dark, now she is Queen, honoured by all and filled with overflowing joy! God is her all, she has found in Him her every need, she knows Him as the fulfilment of her heart's desire. She testifies to us that it is because she obeyed the Guru's word and put away her petty selfishness that she is now robed in auspicious colours, the "Robe of Glory", for her wedding with the Lord

Her only fear now is lest in some way she fail to please her Beloved, and yet she knows well that even then His love would be changeless, infinite, never again can she lose Him She rejoices that through the Guru's kindness she has won Him for all eternity, her heart is simply saturated with love, and she can no longer for even the fraction of a second look at or think of anything but God, her One Beloved Spouse

The interested reader would be struck to see how very closely akin the thought of the Sikh Gurus often comes to the nearly contemporary Spanish mystic, St Teresa, when speaking of this sublime crowning of human life It fills the heart of all lovers of mankind with joy to realise how God calls men and women out of all nations on the earth into this sweet intimacy with Him which can only be spoken of in shadow with the language of human love and marriage This mystery has enriched all the higher religions of earth.

51. The Bliss of Eternal Union

1. One who has destroyed egoism has sewed a garment; [1] through the Guru's speech

[1] This "garment" is the soul s "robe of glory" the "wedding garment", without which none can enter before the King on the

she has won the fruit (of her) lord's honeyed talk[1] (N. *Suhi*, 4: 4). Easily burns the lamp kindled by essential Reality, love-sweetness is the oil of the lamp, (and when) the girl has met the Beloved **she** has been overwhelmed with ecstasy[2] (N *Barah Maha*, 12) One who meets in the heart keeps meeting (again and again)—and that is to be called the (real) meeting;[3] by words (only) there will be no meeting even if she desires it intensely. Metal melts into metal, love runs to love[4] (N *Tilang II*, 1: 7-8) Nanak, one united (with God) by means of the Word never becomes separate (again) (N. *Sri Ashtapadi*, 5: 8). And when Thou (art with me) then what more (need I)[5] (N *Majh ki Var*, 17)?

' wedding day" It consists of the King's own virtues with which He has adorned the soul, cf GP 28

[1] The nectar converse of the soul with her Lord comes to her ears only when they have been purified by listening to the Guru's words

[2] When God lights the lamp of the heart with oil of love, the darkness of ignorance which has hidden Him from the soul is all dispelled

[3] "God is Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship (Him) in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4 24), no external prayers or rites avail with Him The contact is ceaselessly repeated until *sahaja* dawns

[4] *i e*, we can meet with God only in so far as we are like Him The text here runs *dhātu milai phuni dhātu kau liva livai kau dhavai*

[5] A typical piece of Guru Nanak's terseness *jā tū tā kiā hori*

2. Good are **all times** (when) the True One spontaneously comes to meet (us);[1] when the dear Lord is met, everything runs smoothly[2]—The Creator knows all things (and) she whom He has adorned is dear to Him I who have managed to meet (Him) am happy in (His) love; delightful is the couch in (my) home when the Beloved makes love—the happy fortune (written) on a disciple's brow (N *Barah Maha*, 17)!

3. There is a true paean in my house, (for) the Lord has come, (my) Lover! Inundated with the delights of love-making, I have exchanged hearts with God, I have given my own heart and taken God as Spouse As He wishes, so does He make love (to me) (N. *Asa Chhant*, 1: 4)! I remain happy in great blessedness, (for) the Beloved is kind and ever gives (me) new delight (Ar *Jaitsari Chhant*, 1: 4)!

4. Girl friends, gather and sing with delight a song of joy; my Lover has come to my house! Heart and body are sprayed with nectar, and the jewel of love is within (my

[1] The text here reads *bhale ghali mūrata pala sāce āe sahaji mile*.

[2] *lit* "is arranged"

heart) (N *Suhı Chhant*, 2: 2-3) If He set (His) foot on me, I shall blossom like the lotus (Ar *Maru kı Var*, 13 Sl 1)!

5 At the union of Husband and Wife a song of joy is sung, a joyful song (upon God's) glories is sung, the bride rejoices in love, (her) heart is ecstatic . With folded hands that girl prays "Let me be steeped night and day in love's delight" (N. *Gauri Chhant*, 1: 4), (and He replies·) "If you continue to be Mine, (then) all the world shall be yours (F *Sloka* 95)!" Nanak, (now) the Beloved makes love to the girl, my desire is fulfilled (N *Gauri Chhant*, 1: 4)! Day and night the Beloved delights (in me); God is (my) Husband, (and I am) eternally a bride (N. *Barah Maha*, 17)! Nanak, the man (of God) has found lasting wedded bliss[1] (Ar *Asa*, 53: 4)!

No more storms of anxiety and longing! The Bride is now eternally with her adored Husband and holds Him tenderly in her heart, whence He can never more escape! How can they be separated indeed who have now merged in *one*? Who can put apart the two whom God Himself has joined—the human soul transformed by love and the eternal God of Love Himself? And "in Him are all the lesser loves", the Bride finds in her Spouse all that can delight and fill her heart

[1] The last quotation is *thıru sohāgu Nānaka jana pāyā*

Always together—and yet to this perpetual unspeakable bliss is added mystically the joy of incessant reunion Again and again that ecstatic delight recurs, the loving soul is saturated in the raptures of God's embrace, sweeter each time than it was ever yet before! No longer now is she herself, she has become as it were a part of God, His heart in her, her heart in Him, and both filled to overflowing with love's delight! It is a joy ever new and changing and yet always the same, for love is but love though it assumes a myriad forms with every fleeting mood

And now the blissful Bride calls again to her friends and fellow-lovers of the One Lord to share her song of joy in the Marriage with her Spouse and in the ineffable ecstasies which follow it in the heart's sweet intimacy It is an eternal song they sing, for unending is that union and infinite the bliss the song vainly tries to utter forth

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GURU'S DESCENT

After very briefly recalling the stories of the nine earlier bodies through which the One Guru, Nanak, has manifested to his disciples, Guru Gobind Singh, the "Tenth King", tells us how God called him and commissioned him to establish a new and distinct religion on earth, and how he is resolved faithfully to carry out that Divine work In a few swift phrases he then summarises the essential teachings of the Gurus, to which *the Sikhs must always adhere, and at the end he* leaves as his successor among them the Holy Book of the Gurus' hymns and the Church of the bravest of their followers

52. Guru-Parampara

1 Born in the line of those Vedis, NANAK RAI conferred happiness on all his disciples and helped them in this world and the next He established Religion in the Dark Age and showed the way to all holy men Sin never troubles those who follow in his footsteps; from those who embrace his religion God removes

all suffering and sin, never do pain and hunger disturb them, nor do they fall into the noose of Death (G. *Vichitra Natak*, 5: 4-6). Guru Nanak made a prostration to the disciple while he was himself alive, the Master gave the mark[1] (of Guruship) while he (yet) lived: . Nanak proclaimed the accession of ANGAD[2] was the reward of service, (he had) the same light, the identical way of life, the Master (merely) changed the body.[3] . . Nanak having exchanged bodies with (his) scion, he sat upon his throne (SB *Ramkali ki Var*, 1 6-7, 2. 8-9, 3: 5)

2 (Thus) Nanak assumed the body of Angad and made his religion current in the world Afterwards he was called AMAR DAS, as one lamp is lit from another (G *Vichitra Natak*, 5: 7); the same mark, the same throne, the very same court (SB *Ramkali ki Var*, 6. 19) Lehna (Angad), having made the religion of the Church[4] (firm), handed it over to the worthy Amar Das (*Ram Das Sawwaye*, 30)

[1] The mark was the *tilak*, a red spot on the centre of the forehead

[2] In the original the Guru's first name, Lehna, is used

[3] *joti ohā jugati sāi sāhi kāyā pheri palatīai*

[4] *panthu*

When the time came to fulfil the blessing (G *Vichitra Natak*, 5·8), while the True Guru was still incarnate, He himself crowned the successor, (and) all the disciples, relations, sons and brothers fell at the feet of RAM DAS, . all fell at the feet of the true Guru in whom the Guru's self had been infused (*Sadd*, 4 5-6, 6: 3) As Guru Nanak had embraced Angad, so did Guru Amar Das to Guru Ram Das (*Ram Das Sawwaiye*, 55) Then Ram Das became the Guru; Amar Das gave him the Guruship according to the ancient blessing, and himself took the road to Paradise (G. *Vichitra Natak*, 5·8)

3. (O Guru Ram Das), thou (art) Nanak, thou art Lehna, Guru Amaru[1] (art) thou, I consider (SB *Ramkali ki Var*, 7·8)! (Thus) the holy Nanak was revered as Angad, Angad was recognised as Amar Das, and Amar Das became Ram Das, the disciples saw this but not the fools; [2] these thought them all different, while some few persons realised they were all

[1] A short form of the name Amar Das

[2] Failure to recognise this "apostolic succession" led to an estrangement from the actual Guru and thus to the individual dropping from the brotherhood altogether Spiritual life then naturally retrograded

one. Those who understood this gained perfection, (for) without understanding perfection cannot be attained. When Ram Das was blended with God he gave the Guruship to ARJAN (G *Vichitra Natak*, 5: 9-11), to uplift the world, Guru Ram Das established the Light in Guru Arjan[1] (*Arjan Sawwaiye*, 16). The whole (human) race comes and goes but thou thyself (art) new and (ever) whole, Arjan, seated on the Guru's throne (SB *Ramkaḷi ki Var*, 8. 4-5)

4 When Arjan was going to God's City he appointed HARI GOBIND in his place, (and when) Hari Gobind was going to God's City he set HARI RAI in his seat; afterwards his son HARI KRISHAN became the Guru. After him came TEG BAHADUR, who protected their castemarks and sacred threads and showed great courage in the Dark Age[2] When he was putting an end to his life for the sake of holy men, he gave his head but uttered not a groan, he suffered martyrdom for the sake of

[1] *Rāmadāsi gurū jaga tārana kau gura joti Arjuna māhi dharī*

[2] He protected Hindus from Moghul and Panjabi Muslim persecution and at last deliberately offered himself as a martyr, see Introduction, pp xcvii-xcviii

his religion, he gave his head but swerved not from his resolve. Men of God would be ashamed to work the tricks of conjurors and cheats.[1] Having broken his potsherd on the head of Delhi's King, he departed to Paradise. None came who performed such deeds as **he**; at **his** departure there was mourning in the world, there was grief throughout the world but joy in Paradise (G. *Vichitra Natak*, 5: 11-16). (Before he departed he said to his disciples.) "The Name remains, the good man remains, (and) Guru GOBIND remains[2] (T. *Slokas* 56)!

In this passage, largely taken from the autobiography of Guru Gobind Singh and filled out with a few isolated texts from different parts of the Holy Granth, the doctrine of the essential unity of all the Gurus with Guru Nanak is taught Each of the ten before his passing away ensured the continuity of training by themselves appointing their successor, in a large public gathering of disciples each in turn enthroned the chosen heir and offered him the traditional gift of a coconut and five farthings There was a slight variation in the case of the last, who instead of selecting an individual human Guru to manifest the divine spirit transferred the afflatus to the Granth Sahib and to the Khalsa (*i e* Church) as it meets in official status and issues a

[1] The Emperor of Delhi asked him to work miracles to show the truth of his mission, but with dignified contempt he refused to do such things

[2] *nāma rahiu sādhū rahiu rahiu gura Gobinda*

Gurmatā (decree). From Nanak himself, the first form of the Guru, who taught the whole truth, down to the beloved martyr-hero Teg Bahadur, and through him to his son Guru Gobind—all alike were equally inspired, ensouled, by the same great Teacher Those who understand this truth are on the path to the true understanding of Religion as revealed to the Sikhs.

53. The Tenth Guru

1. God brought me into the world as I was doing austerities on the Hemakuta Mountain,[1] **where** I performed such penance that I was blended with God.[2] My father and mother[3] had also worshipped the Unseen and striven in many ways to unite themselves with Him; the Supreme Guru was pleased with their devotion to Him (G. *Vichitra Natak*, 6: 1-4).

2. The Supreme gave the command[4] (and) I was born in the Dark Age; I had no desire to come, my mind being fixed upon God's feet God pleaded earnestly with me and sent me into the world with the mandate: . . . "I have cherished you as My son and

[1] The actual place is said to be in Sapta-sringa, at Hemkund or Lokpal, not far from the path to Badrinarayana.

[2] *or* till diversity was changed into one form

[3] Their names were Guru Teg Bahadur and Mata Gujari

[4] *or* when the Supreme made known His will

appointed you to spread (My) Religion.[1] Go into the world, establish virtue [2] and keep the people from evil" I stood up with folded hands and, bowing the head, replied: "The Religion shall prevail in the world when Thou lendest (Thine) aid" (G *Vichitra Natak*, 6: 4-5, 29-30)

3. To this end (He) sent me (here), so I took birth, I come into the world As the Lord spoke (to me), so do I proclaim to the world, to none do I bear enmity Whoever calls me the Supreme Lord shall fall into the pit of Hell, [3] know that I am but God's servant and have come to behold the drama of creation What my Lord told me, that I repeat in the world, [4] I shall not be silent for the fear of men [5] As God spoke, so do I declare, I will pay heed to none (but God) . I do no worship to

[1] *panthu*

[2] *dharama*

[3] Guru Gobind must have had definite reason for warning against such a tendency to deify him, little truly spiritual was added to Christianity or to other creeds when the Founder's spiritual oneness with God was misunderstood as a claim to unique divinity, cf GI 37 and 27 The prophet Muhammed also denied such ideas with reference to himself and made such denial a proof of the true prophets of God

[4] *Cf* the faithfulness of all true Prophets GI 37, GZ 53, GJ 104, GMC 35, GN 23 and GP 53 3 The text reads *jo nija prabha mo so kahā so kahiho jaga māhi*

[5] In Gurmukhi *kahio prabhū so bhākha hūn, kisu na kāna rākha hūn*

stones, nor do I imitate the rites of anyone;[1] . . . I meditate upon the Name of the Infinite and (so) attain to the Supreme Light. On no other do I meditate, the name of no other do I pronounce (G. *Vichitra Natak*, 6: 31-39).

4. For this sole reason, to establish virtue, was I sent to the world by the Divine Guru;[2] . . . no one understood the Supreme Being or understood the true principles and practice of virtue. The doctrine of no other is of any avail, . . . there is no benefit in any other teaching, fix this in your minds. . . . Nothing but virtue shall avail at last. . . When I obtained the sovereignty I promoted virtue to the utmost of my power; . . . knowing me to be His slave, (God) has aided me, He has given me His hand and saved me (G. *Vichitra Natak*, 6: 42, 45, 48; 8: 1, 14: 2).

So too, not less than his nine predecessors, was Guru Gobind a reappearance of the same great Guru —in another form and mood as required by the changing times He came partly to earn the respect of the Muslim

[1] Owing to the conflict with Muslims, a tendency to confuse Sikhism with Hindu "idolatry" doubtless caused this declaration from the Guru

[2] *Cf*, the passage from the same source *chai kāja dharā ham janamam / samajha leo sādhū saba mananam / dharama calāvana santa ubārana / duṣaṭa sabhana kau mūla upārana, //* (6 43), *i e.* "For this purpose I took birth—understand all pious folk—to uphold righteousness and exalt the saints, to tear up all the wicked (by their) roots."

rulers of that day, so that they might learn to leave his followers, the Sikhs, in peace He came with the sword, in warrior garb and desperate campaignings, so that many were deceived and thought he changed the truth revealed by Guru Nanak, but he came with the same message of pure Religion, even though he added to it the needed truths of fortitude, a readiness to sacrifice life gladly for the Cause, a manly independence and a strong resistance to injustice and to all wrong He strove, and with God's good help he carried his arms to success, though to the outward superficial eye his life might seem a failure like that which ended on the hill of Calvary It was only in later years that men could see how well he did the work God gave to him, how firmly was laid the foundation for the brave and noble nation of the Sikhs.

54. The Guru's Last Word

1 A death[1] of truth, (and) falsehood prevails; (because of) the blackness of the Dark Age (men are like) demons (N *Asa di Var*, 11 Sl 1) *Yet for the love of such creatures did the Guru take birth to save them He has taught them the true Name, and very fortunate are those who have accepted and valued his teaching, (for) by it they are enabled to save themselves and others from the perils of the world-ocean*[2] (5. 243 G)

[1] *Lāla* M reads this as "dearth", Prof Jodh Singh as "Truth is scarce"

[2] This, with most passages of this section in italics, comes from M's account of the passing away of the Tenth Guru, which may derive in part from the *Prem Sumarag* used in para 7, quoted by Teja Singh in his useful little book *Sikhism* (p 32)

2. By egoism is one bound, by the Guru's words set free[1] (Ar *Majh Ashtapadi*, 2: 6). *As when rain falls after a drought there is plenty, so the Guru, seeing human beings in misery and longing for happiness, came to give it them and to take away their sorrows by his teaching* (5: 243 G). (Now) has the Supreme God (our) Lord sent the Cloud[2] and made it rain on sea and land in (all) Earth's ten directions. . . . The Cloud pours rain in every place; . . (yes), rain has fallen, (and) it was God who made it fall . Comfort has come (to man), all thirst is quenched, there is joy everywhere[3] (Ar. *Majh*, 34: 1, 29 1, 32: 1, 34: 1)! *And as the rain stays where it falls, so does the Guru's teaching ever remain with his disciples*[4] (5: 243 G).

3. The true Guru meets him for whom it was written of old, (to him) the Lord comes (R. *Gauri ki Var*, 7 Sl 2), sweet is the Guru's nectar speech[5] (AD *Majh Ashtapadi*, 7: 1)!

[1] *haumai bādhā guramukhi chūtā* the Guru's usual economy of words We may read, " the disciple escapes "

[2] *Pārabrahmi prabhi meghu pathāyā*

[3] This resumes the theme in GGS 1, but carries a slightly more hopeful colour—" all thirst is quenched "

[4] because he has infused his spirit into them

[5] *amrita bānī gura kī mīthī*

(Now) is the egg of illusion broken, light has shone out in the mind, the Guru has cut the fetters from (his) feet and made the captive free [1] (Ar. *Maru*, 14: 1)! Say, Nanak: (When) through the Guru the illusion is lost, Allah and Parabrahm are (seen as) one [2] (Ar. *Ramkali*, 45: 5); temple and mosque are the same,[3] worship and prostration [4] are the same—all men are one, but various are the forces (leading them) [5] (G. *Akal Ustat*, 86). Do not say the Vedas or (other religious) books [6] lie; he who does not study them is lying (K *Prabhati* 4. 1). Allah and Abhekh [7] are the same, Purana and Qur'an are the same—one only in

[1] This verse was taken by M as a motto for his fine volumes

[2] *kahu Nānaka guri khoe bharama / eko Alahu Pārabrahama*

[3] *dehara masīta soi* This word is a Punjabi corruption of Arabic *masjid*

[4] *pūjā au nivāj*, *pūja* is understood as the worship of God through rites performed before a visible emblem of Him, such as an image, the sun, flame, it is a purely Hindu word *Nivāj*, or *nemāz*, is the fixed ritual of prostrations to God performed according to Quranic rules and before no visible symbol, but directed vaguely towards Mecca (*cf* GI 93 1)

[5] *prabhāu*; M reads this passage. "It is through error they seem different" but this is certainly too free, the text is *aneka ko prabhāu hai*

[6] *kateba*, this word (Ar. *kutub*) is generally used for the sacred books of Muslims, Jews, Christians, but we need not thus strictly limit it, the literal meaning is just "books"

[7] *abhekha* lit "without *vesa*, or *rūpa*", *i e*, the Formless One.

(their) essence (as) One alone made (them) all (G. *Akal Ustat*, 86). The Master of Hindu and Muslim is one; what can a Mulla do, what can a Sheikh do [1] (K. *Bhairo*, 4: 3)?

4 Many Gods and Primal Youths, many Krishnas and Vishnus (have taken) birth! [2] . . Many (were) terrible [3] (or) small [4] in appearance, many Ramas and Krishnas of peerless beauty! . . The Maker (*Kartā*) and the Noble (*Karīm*), Providence (*Razak*) and the Merciful (*Rahīm*) are (all) the same; [5] through carelessness or superstition do not imagine any difference at all (between one and) the other (G *Akal Ustat*, 39-40, 85). The Hindu worships (in) the temple and the

[1] I am indebted to Prof Jodh Singh for the rendering of the second half of this sentence He explains that even the learned Muslim cannot controvert this fact that there is one Lord for Hindu and for Muslim alike

[2] *kaī deva ādikumāra / kaī Kisana Bisana avatāra* While freely using the holy Names of Hindu deity which have such sweet association, the Gurus were quite clear that all such "Avatars" were simply men chosen by the One God to do His work on earth and that to worship them is to betray the truth

[3] *rudra*, like Hiranyakasipu's Slayer Narasimha, who came to save Prahlad

[4] *chudra*, like the Dwarf Vamana who liberated Bali from his pride

[5] While *Kartā*, the Creator, is a typically Sikh Name for God *Karīm*, *Rahīm* and *Rāzak* are more familiar to Muslims The Guru did all that was humanly possible to draw these two great religions closer together *Cf* the list of God's 99 Names on pp 201-203 of *The Gospel of Islam*

Muslim (in) the mosque; **Nanak** [1] serves the same (God) where neither temple is nor mosque (Nd. *Gond*, 7: 4).

5. I do not fast by (Hindu) vow, nor do I observe the Ramadān,[2] yet I serve Him who will save (me) at the last; the one Lord is my Allah, the Judge of both Hindu and Muslim.[3] I do not go on pilgrimage to the Ka'ba or worship at (Hindu) shrines; [4] I serve the One and no other besides. I do not offer (Hindu) worship, nor do I cause (Muslim) prostrations to take place; taking the One (who is) Formless into the heart, I bow (to Him there). I am neither Hindu nor Muslim; body and life belong to Allah-Rama! [5] **Nanak** says "I have made this declaration: when I meet Guru or Pir,[6] I recognise my own Master" (Ar *Bhairo*, 3 1-4)!

[1] In the original, of course, Namdev's name stood here

[2] *varata na rahau na maha ramadānā*, for the Muslim month of fasting see GI 88

[3] *lit turaka* Even today in many parts of India Muslims are called Turks

[4] *haja kābai jāu na tīratha pūjā* The Ka'ba is the great black stone in Mecca, believed to be possibly a meteor, which is the Muslim "centre of the world" and the goal of the "*Hajj*", or pilgrimage (*cf* GI 89)

[5] The Guru shows his perfect catholicity by thus combining the two holy Names adored by Muslim and Hindu This passage, originally written by Kabir, was bodily incorporated by Guru Arjun in his own poems

[6] *pir*, a Muslim saint or religious teacher, equivalent to "guru"

6 Ever since I have touched Thy feet I have cared for no one else; Rama's Puranas [1] and Rahim's Qur'an [2] express many views, but I accept none (of them) (G. *Ram Autar*). Millions of men may read the Quran, they may read innumerable Puranas, but it shall be of no use to them in the future (life) and the power of fate shall still rule over them [3] (G. *Vichitra Natak*, 6: 47) God is not found in the Vedas or (in other) Scriptures; [4] know this (well that) God is in the heart of man (G. *Vichitra Nataka*, 6: 61), the Giver of all, Knower of all, and Guardian of all (G. *Akal Ustat*, 190), One in the heart and One in every place (besides) (Ar. *Gauri*, 8: 4) [1]

7 *The Sikhs who love the true Guru are beloved by him in turn* (5: 243 G), O Nanak, it is he whom the Guru meets who dwells in (his) heart (Ar. *Gauri ki Var II*, 13 Sl. 2), within the disciples of the Guru the true Guru

[1] Most of the Puranas deal with the avataras of Vishnu, one of whose best-known names is Rama

[2] The Qur'ān is a message from Allah to man, and He is therein continually named " *ArRahmāni ArRahīm* "

[3] This is not an attack on sacred books but on bibliolatry, relying on adherence to one rather than another to supply the lack of virtue and devotion

[4] *beda kateba bikhe Hari nāhi*

abides (R *Gauri ki Var*, 33 Sl 2) The Guru is the Sikh and the Sikh the Guru (when) he spreads the teaching of the One Guru[1] (R. *Asa Chhant*, 2: 8) *Wherever there are five Sikhs assembled who abide by the Guru's teachings, know that I am in their midst*,[2] (5 243 G) *let him who wishes to see me go to an assembly of Sikhs and approach them with faith and reverence, he will surely see me amongst them* (*Prem Sumarag*) *Henceforth the Guru shall be the Khalsa and the Khalsa the Guru, I have infused my spirit, heart and body, into the Granth Sahib and the Khalsa*[3] *O Khalsa, remember the true Name;*
I have attached you to the skirt of the Immortal God and entrusted you to Him—ever remain under His protection and trust to none besides (5: 243-244 G).

8 *O beloved Khalsa, let him who desires to see me look into the Guru Granth Obey the Guru Granth, it is the Guru's visible body; and let him who longs to meet me search diligently its hymns.*

[1] *gurū sikhu sikhu gurū hai eko gura upadesu calāe*

[2] *Cf* the promise of Jesus to his disciples (Mt 18 20)

[3] Here we have a conception closely parallel to that of the Christian Church as the "Mystical Body" of the Christ, the Guru is in a sense actually incarnate in the body of the faithful

. *Read the Guru Granth, or listen to it; so shall your hearts receive consolation, and you shall certainly obtain a dwelling in the Guru's Heaven* (5. 243-244 G).

9. At dawn repeat the Lord's Name and brood upon the Guru's feet (Ar *Maru ki Var II*, 16 Sl 1), as a mother is wrapped up in (her) child, so does the knower (of God) take the Name (Ar *Sorathi*, 83· 3) Remember that Beloved day and night, (for) where (that) memory is your fear of men departs (K *Ramkali*, 9· 5-6) *Those who remember the true Name make their lives fruitful, and when they depart they enter the mansions of eternal bliss* (5: 243 G); by remembering God you will attain to union (with Him)[1] (K *Ramkali*, 9: 7). God and God's servant are both one, do not think there is any difference between them (G *Vichitra Natak*, 6· 60), the Saints and God are one [2] (K *Suhi*, 5: 4).

In this fallen age men are indeed often like demons and yet God loves them even in their wickedness and to save them He sends the Teacher of the Truth, who

[1] *Hari simaranu pāiai sanjoga*

[2] Could we end this chapter better than by Kabir's thrilling words "*santa Rāmu hai eko*"? They sum up the essence of the whole book

sings in their ears and sows in their hearts the all-redeeming Name

It is egoism, selfishness, which causes all earth's misery, and the Guru's message destroys that egoism and sets men free In our chosen age God has once more sent that Guru, and his teaching now pours out upon the drought-parched earth like the soft refreshing rain at the close of summer heat Everywhere the Truth is now revealed, and all who care may know how to be free from sorrow, God has also built a Church, written a Holy Book, in which to store that Truth so that it may at all times be available for every seeker while the world endures

The Truth has made us free, it has shattered the dark illusion of the ego which held us bound to misery, it has brought us to the Vision of the Lord And we, coming out of every nation on the earth, have found that each has the same one Infinite Lord, it was our egoistic pride alone that made us fancy only our own creed was true and all other men were deceived by false religions—but now we see that all alike are God's children and led by Him along their own paths into the unity of His one true Universal Church There is no false religion as such, Islām and the Sanātana Dharma, Christianity, Buddhism, the Parsi teachings of Zarathushtra, the lost creeds of Māni, Pyramid, Egyptians and the Gnostics—all are God's own truth, decked in varying colours for men's different tastes, all alike lead His many children home to His feet

How many creeds there have been on earth! How many Prophets and wonderful Avatars of God have laboured to save erring men from their darkness and their sin! How many Names they have used for God, each to appeal to the heart of different souls and peoples! Some worship Him in one way, some in another, some through art or science, some with lights

and incense, some in the silence of the heart or the sweet songs of mighty congregations, some through the courage of explorers or men of war! Yet all are His children, seeking Him in various ways, led by Him through different paths to the ecstasy of mystic union at last, their feeble voices of prayer and praise are equally sweet in that Father's ears, whatever words or actions they choose to show their love for Him.

The Sikh is not a Hindu or a Muslim, he is the disciple of the One Eternal Guru of the world, and all who learn of Him are truly Sikhs and must not corrupt His teachings with the confused utterances of men who live among them and around. Sikhism is no disguised Hindu sect, but an independent revelation of the one Truth of all sects, it is no variant of Muslim teaching, save in that it too proclaims the love of God and the need for men to hold Him always in their heart It too is a distinct religion like the other great religions of the world

Those who have once seen God have no eyes for any other, have no ears for any lesser truth; their whole being is absorbed in the Light they have once perceived. Though the ways of seeking Him are taught in many holy books, He cannot be found in any book, in any outer thing—for He is in the heart of man, that holiest of temples built by His own holy hand and sanctified by His perpetual presence there, even as He is indeed in all the universe besides But those who rely superstitiously on their adherence to a special sect or creed or scripture will have to seek Him there in the heart itself some day; salvation depends on deeds and on devotion and not on external observances or loyalties

Where the pupil is, there too is the Teacher, and nevermore will the Sikhs be alone or deprived of that holy Guru For He who cannot lie has given the promise that He will always be where only five are faithful to His teaching and that He will manifest to

them through all the councils of His faithful Church And where only one single Sikh is found? There too is He, abiding in the heart, and residing also in the hymns sung by Him through the hallowed bodies of the Ten —now gathered for the delight and enlightenment of all the ages in the GURU GRANTH SAHIB In the holy presence of the Guru's Book, the Guru Himself is manifest

Those who love that Book, who cling devotedly to the God whom it proclaims in words of matchless beauty, who seek to spend their every moment at His feet, will be free from every fear, will enter the Heaven of God's own presence and there attain to everlasting union with the Beloved Lord

PART TWO

CHAPTER NINE

JAPJI—THE GURU'S HYMN

We close our "Gospel of the Guru-Granth Sahib" with this great Hymn wherewith the *Guru Granth* itself commences, it is one of the world's noblest religious and devotional writings, of which Puran Singh writes in such glowing terms (see Preface). It is the common view of Sikh scholars that this Hymn contains the essence of the whole teaching of the Guru, and it is the pious practice of all Sikhs to start each day with its recitation.

After a noble account of God Himself, the Guru shows us how all happiness, all wisdom, all spiritual progress on earth, all worldly success, really derive from obedience to and love of Him He then teaches us how great is the saint and devotee amid the countless types of living beings made by God—on whose infinite greatness he again touches lightly The whole adoration of the universe which He has made rightly goes to Him Then the Guru in a few powerful words sketches the five "planes" of spiritual life, and closes with the reminder that truth and sincerity lead to the One True Being in whom is all eternal bliss

55. The Eternal Unknown

1. One Supreme Being, the true-and-eternal Name, the Creative Person[1] fearless and without enmity, the timeless Form unborn and self-existing,[2] the Enlightener (known) through grace;[3] true in the beginning, true in the night of ages, (He) is true even now, and will be true (eternally, says) Nanak.

2. By thinking comes no thought (of the Real), even if I think a lakh of times; by keeping silent the (real) Silence does not come, even if I remain long entranced; the hunger of the hungry does not pass, even though I be burdened with many worlds.[4] Even were there thousands and lakhs of clever speculations, not even one could finally succeed (in reaching Him). How then to attain the Truth? How can the veil of falsehood[5] be rent asunder? By walking (so as) to satisfy the

[1] *purakhu* this is explained by Sikhs as "the Pervading One"

[2] *saibham*, i e, who gives out light independently

[3] *gura prasādi* or "enlightener through grace"

[4] Nothing can satisfy the soul's hunger, even if a universe be given It is only the Infinite can fill the human heart and leave no want

[5] *kūlai*, i e, the unreal, illusory view of things

(Divine) Will which is written (in the heart),[1] says Nanak (N *Japji* 1).

The great Hymn opens with the "Mulamantra" we have already met in §2 3, wherewith the Holy Book of the Sikhs commences, placing thus as its very foundation the Holy Name and Attributes of God

Nanak proclaims that so great is this God He cannot be found by reason or speculative thought, nor even through silent meditation as believed by the philosophers—the yearning for that Perfection which is in Him alone can only be satisfied by obedience to His Will as expressed in the conscience of each soul.

56. The Glory of God's Will

1. At (God's) Will[2] forms come into being; (that) Will cannot be uttered (in) words At (His) Will living souls come to be and at (His) Will they grow great;[3] at (His) Will (they become) noble (or) mean, at (His) Will they receive the sorrow (or) happiness decreed (as a result).[4] Some (get) pardon[5] by (His) Will, others at (His) will are

[1] God can be found only through the path of surrender and obedience, by means of devotion and good action The conscience is the guide

[2] *or* command, and so throughout this section

[3] *lit* greatness meets (them) *hukamī milai vadiāī*

[4] Noble acts earn happiness, mean acts sorrow, this is the Law

[5] *or* grace (*bakhasīsa*)

always straying; all are within (His) Will, not one is outside (the sphere of His) Will [1] Nanak, if one understands (this) Will, then he will never speak of the ego [2] (N *Japji* 2).

2. Those who have the power (of song) sing (His) power, some sing (His) gifts, realising (in them) signs (of His goodness); some sing (His) glories and the greatness of (His) beauties; some sing a philosophy hard to follow. Some sing, "After creating it He turns the body into dust", [3] some sing, "Having taken souls (away) He gives (them back) again", [4] some sing "He seems to be far away"; some sing, "He sees (us, being) very near indeed".[5] No end comes for the telling of those who tell (of Him), crores [6] and crores have tried to tell in crores of ways, the

[1] I do not think it is possible to read this section as a glorification of human free-will, as one scholar has done, this does not cohere with the character of the whole passage

[2] Realising how God's Will *is* always done on earth as it is in Heaven, man understands how puny his petty desires and efforts are, unless confirmed by being in line with that almighty Will of God

[3] The doctrine of Christians, Muslims etc —also of materialists to some extent

[4] The doctrine of reincarnation, as taught by most Hindus, Buddhists, etc

[5] God Transcendent, and God Immanent He is both of these.

[6] *crore, i e*, ten millions.

Giver keeps on giving (while) the receivers grow weary—from age to age they eat and eat The Ordainer keeps the world's work moving,[1] (yet), Nanak, He is blissful and free from anxiety (N. *Japji*, 3)

That Will, the following of which leads us to God, is the Omnipotent Power which made the universe, fashioned our own souls, and guides eternally all things through time and space It is by His will alone that some souls find Him and others seem doomed to endless wandering through the deserts of despair; it is by His will that some become saints while others seem more like demons He who knows God's will by constantly revering it realises that man's petty self has no power to do more than bow before it, and then his conceit withers out of sight

Infinite is that Will of God, ineffable and transcending thought, yet the longing for Him which He has placed in every heart tries to express its wonder and admiration; each soul speaks of it feebly enough, but as eloquently as the powers He has given each allow. Souls speak differently according to their views and natures, at times they seem to contradict each other, yet all alike try to tell of the glory of the same Infinite Being beyond all being They try to tell of Him and fail because of the limitations of their vision and their words, but all the time He IS, and unshaken by the weakness of His mortal creatures He is ever good to them and ceaselessly gives them lavishly all they need He never wearies of doing good; it is they who sometimes grow tired of receiving His benefits

[1] A rather free rendering for *hukamī hukamu calāe rāhu*

57. Love and Grace

1. Eternal is the Master, changeless the Law,[1] and infinite Love (is His) language, begging we say, "Give, give!" (and) the Giver makes (His) gifts What (can we) offer in return [2] so that we may see (His) Court? What words are we to utter with the lips so that He may hear and love (us)? In the nectar hour (of dawn) brood upon the greatness of the eternal Name; from (His) grace comes the Robe, through (His) kindly look Liberation and the Door,[3] Nanak, thus know that the Eternal Himself (is in) all (N *Japji*, 4)

2 He cannot be installed (in temples), nor was He (ever) made, He is (of) Himself

[1] *sācā sāhibu sācā nāi*, this word *sācā*, cognate with Skt *satyam*, has its dual sense of reality and truth, eternity and changelessness This verse may be taken as "True is God and true (His) Name, but most Sikh scholars prefer the reading "Law" in this place It amounts to the same thing, for the *Name* is God manifest in His Law

[2] lit "What can we place again before (Him)?" (*pheri ki agai rakhīai*)

[3] An important verse *karamī āvai kapaṛā nadarī mokhu duāru* Some take it to mean "By (good) action a better birth comes, but the gate of liberation through grace" I suggest the *kapaṛā* is rather the Robe wherewith the Spouse adorns His bride, for virtues come through God's kindness too *Mokhu duāru* is presumably a case of *hendiadys*, *i e*, "liberation (and) the gate" for "the gate of Liberation" (cf §59 4)

immaculate;[1] it is the one who clings to[2] (Him) who has obtained honour.[3] Nanak, let us praise the Treasury of Goodness, let us sing and hear (His praise) and keep (His) love in the heart, He will remove our sorrow and take (us) into the abode of happiness.[4] The Guru's word is music, the Guru's word is scripture, the Guru's word is all-pervading:[5] the Guru is the Lord, the Guru is the Protector of Souls and the Creator, the Guru is Mother Parvati.[6] Even if I know Him I cannot describe Him (for) He cannot be told. O Guru, grant (me) this one understanding, that I may never be able to forget the One Giver of all souls (N. *Japji*, 5)!

3. I would bathe in the holy waters[7] if I (could thus) please Him, but without pleasing

[1] *āpe āpu niranjanu soi*, "stainless", "unconditioned by māyā"

[2] *sevīā* serves, remembers delights in

[3] *or* greatness (*mānu*)

[4] So Prof Jodh Singh.

[5] A striking verse, it runs, *guramukhi nādam guramukhi vedam guramukhi rahiā samāī*. There are many ways of translating it, we may prefer to read "The disciple (becomes) ..." in each clause

[6] *Isaru* . . *Gorakhu* . *Baramā* . *Pārabatī māī*, I have preferred to translate most of these names rather than preserve the somewhat deistic Hindu flavour of the original Guru Nanak was no worshipper of Siva, Gorakh, Brahma or Parvati

[7] *tīrathi nāvā*

(Him) what is the use of (that) bathing?[1] I look at all the (visible) creation made (by Him); what can be gained without (His) grace? Gems, jewels, pearls[2] (appear) in the understanding if even one teaching of the Guru be attended to; Guru, grant (me this) one understanding, that I may never be able to forget the One Giver of all souls (N. *Japji*, 6)!

4. If (a man) lived through the four ages[3] or even ten times longer and were known in the nine parts (of earth),[4] were everyone to follow (him) and he to win a good name and obtain glory and fame in the world—unless (God's) gracious glance came to him, then no one would enquire after him,[5] he would be held a worm among worms and a guilty offender. Nanak, (God) makes virtues in the virtueless and grants (more) virtue to the virtuous; no one is to be seen who (can) make (any) virtue for Him[6] (N. *Japji*, 7)

[1] The path is one of effort and obedience, not of mere rites

[2] *or* rubies.

[3] The Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas, totalling 4,320,000 years

[4] *or* continents (*navā khandā*), we now speak rather of five

[5] *i e*, care for him, cf §§31 6, 32 2 and 35 2

[6] Note the Visishtadvaita meaning here given to *nirguna*, the passage reads *niraguni gunu kare gunavantiā gunu de | tehā koi na sujhaī*

Like a father to his child, so does He give to us, what can we give to Him who already has, is, all? How can we worthily praise Him whose nature far transcends our boldest dreams of perfection? There is nothing we can do to increase His endless glory, it is for us simply to bask in its radiance, to delight in meditating on His love and greatness, which give us all the virtues, all the graces, all the beauties we may possess—and through whose kindness we enter at last His eternal Kingdom.

God is not an image we can fashion and instal in a temple for our worship, nor is He born as a human child; He alone IS, beyond all time and space, everywhere and always. Our rituals and bowings, please ourselves and, as outer acts of submission to God's Will, they have their own place in our training to be saints—but they leave God unmoved on His eternal throne. He feels no anger at those who withhold from Him such acts of worship, but rather pities them for the loss of the happiness interior surrender would ensure to them It is love for Him which is our only real path to joy; for He alone can be our spiritual Teacher Can the tiny child understand everything his teacher says? So is He too beyond our thought or understanding, and it is for us only to hold Him lovingly in our heart and to remember Him at all times

Outer sacramental rites are of little or no real value unless they correspond to the inward reality All blessings, all graces, all virtues come not from ceremonies but from God's kindness, which adorns the loving soul with every beauty It is this clinging love which is the essence of God's teaching to the heart and which blossoms out in every beauty

ji tisu gunu koi kare The word does not primarily mean "quality-less".

Immortality and universal sovereignty, fame and power are worth nothing at all unless they be gifts of God's grace to lead the soul towards His feet. It is He alone who gives us what we need, and to snatch at other things is gross impiety. He gives us all, and there is none of us can add to His infinite wealth of goodness by a single prayer or gift

58. The Fruits of Devotion

1 By listening [1] (to the Name one becomes) an adept, a saint, a god, a master, [2] by listening (one becomes) the Earth, the (supporting) Bull,[3] the Sky, by listening islands, spheres and underworlds; by listening immune to time, [4] Nanak, Devotees ever blossom (in joy,[5] for) by listening (their) sorrow and sin are destroyed (N. *Japji*, 8).

[1] *suniai* The word implies far more than merely "hearing" God's Name uttered by the lips, it connotes the eager watching for signs of God's Will and ceaseless holding of heart and mind as in His presence, ready to anticipate His least suggestion and to carry it out in life This is the stage of *sramana*

[2] *siddha pīra suri nātha* The "*siddha*" is one who has carried his yogic practices through to perfection, the "*pīra*" (or "guru") one qualified to teach spiritual life to others, the "*sura*" is the immortal deity, and the "*nātha*" one who has mastered the law of life

[3] Popular mythology of that and earlier times held that this earth was kept in its place on the back of a huge bull—that animal being a symbol of strength, the absurdity of this idea is well shown up by the Guru in §60

[4] *or* death

[5] *vigāsu*, Skt *vikāśa*, increase, spread, blossom it is used for any great exultant joy which "expands" the heart

2. By listening (one becomes) the Lord, Creator and King (of Gods),[1] by listening praises (come) in the mouth of the vile,[2] by listening the secrets in the body (are learned) through the practice of yoga,[3] by listening the scriptures, law codes and revelations (are understood); Nanak, devotees ever blossom (in joy, for) by listening (their) sorrow and sin are destroyed (N *Japji*, 9)

3. By listening generosity, contentment and wisdom (arise),[4] by listening (comes) the merit (of) bathing in the sixty-eight (holy places), by listening they obtain the credit of reading and reading, by listening they easily attain to deep contemplation;[5] Nanak, devotees ever blossom (in joy, for) by listening (their) sorrow and sin are destroyed (N *Japji*, 10).

4. By listening they achieve the ocean deeps of goodness,[6] by listening (they become)

[1] *Īsaru Baramā Indu*, *i e.* "Īswara (Siva), Brahmā and Indra", see note to §57 2

[2] *i e*, even wicked men are led to worship God But Teja Singh reads this "he will begin to dislike the offering of praise to them", while Sahib Singh and Mohan Singh agree with our reading.

[3] *suniai joga jugati tani bheda*

[4] *satu, santokhu, giānu*

[5] *suniai lāgai sahaji dhiānu*

[6] *sarā gunā ke gāha*, lit grasp the qualities of the ocean

sages,[1] saints and kings, by listening (even) the blind find the road (to God), by listening they come (to understand) the depths of the world-ocean (of life); [2] Nanak, devotees ever blossom (in joy, for) by listening (their) sorrow and sin are destroyed (N *Japji*, 11).

All progress comes to us through devotion to the Will of God and continual dwelling in the memory of His Name, the weak and sinful become righteous, the ignorant become wise, the mortal attain to immortality, the human change to the divine, purity and all virtues arise in the heart, the mind gains the power to dive deep into the sources of all true wisdom, the heart learns how to penetrate the secrets of saintliness Yes, obedience to the Divine Will because of love for Him transmutes man into God Himself and destroys every trace in him of frailty and wretchedness How then can such a man be other than eternally happy?

59. The Fruits of Obedience

1. The state of the obedient [3] cannot be told; if anyone (tries) to tell it he repents later on; (there is) no writer (with) pen on

[1] *sekha*, the familiar Arabic word "*sheikh*", wise man, old man.

[2] *hātha hovai asagāhu*, M reads "the hand becomes irresistible", but Sahib Singh shows how it acquired the meaning we have adopted

[3] *manne*, this word is cognate with Skt *manana*, and is held to mean the paying of close attention to what is heard (from God) and the steady effort to put His will into practice The second stage of meditation

paper to sit down and make a study of the condition of the obedient—so unconditioned is the Name, (as) anyone knows who looks carefully into (his) heart [1] (N *Japji*, 12).

2. By obedience [2] intelligence and clear thought [3] arise in the mind, by obedience an awareness [4] of all the worlds, by obedience one suffers no calamities,[5] by obedience one does not go in Death's company—so unconditioned is the Name, (as) anyone knows who looks carefully into his heart (N. *Japji*, 13).

3. By obedience no obstacles are found on the path, one proceeds openly with honour by obedience, by obedience one does not walk on bye-lanes, by obedience (he becomes) united with Righteousness [6]—such is the

[1] *aisā nāmu niranjanu hoi / je ko manni jānai mani koi* The word *niranjanu*, lit unstained, immaculate, is taken to mean "*untouched by māyā*"

[2] *mannai*, i e, by the aforesaid act of carrying out, keeping "God's commandments" after the careful consideration of what they are

[3] *surati budhi* The former is the power to form wise decisions, the latter the ability to distinguish instantly between right and wrong, important and unimportant, etc, it is rendered by S as "wakefulness" (*jāgrata*)

[4] *sudhi*, i e, one comes to know what happens in other worlds and planes

[5] lit "one does not eat blows in the mouth", i e, has no insulting trouble

[6] *dharma seti sana bandhu* thus becoming one with the Path itself, after which no wandering astray is possible, no sin can arise

unconditioned Name, (as) anyone knows who looks carefully into (his) heart (N. *Japji*, 14).

4. By obedience they gain the door of Liberation,[1] by obedience the family is supported,[2] by obedience the teacher is saved and saves the disciple, Nanak, by obedience they do not wander (as) beggars [3] (in the world)—so unconditioned is the Name, (as) anyone knows who looks carefully into (his) heart (N *Japji*, 15)!

It is impossible fully to narrate the glories of such obedience to God with faith or of the devout contemplation of His Name, they can be known only through ourselves experiencing them in our own lives This much can be said, that they arouse understanding and courage in the heart, destroy the fear of death and suffering, remove all spiritual hindrances, enrich the soul with honours and steadiness and all kinds of good qualities, lead it to Perfection, and then bring it as the saviour of its fellows Such is the power of "repeating the Name" with faith and love, that is, of practising the presence of God in a spirit of adoring aspiration, putting the revealed God first as the ruling power in our hearts and lives, in everything we say and do.

[1] *mokha duāru*, *cf* note to §57 1

[2] *paravārai sadhāru*, Teja Singh points out that spiritual support is meant here and not the mere provision of worldly needs

[3] *bhavahi na bhikha*, *i e*, they wander no longer into rebirth seeking God, for they have already found Him

60. All Creatures Obey God's Will

1 The Elect[1] are trusted, the Elect are leaders, the Elect receive honour in (God's) Court, the Elect shine in the gate of Kings;[2] contemplation is the only teacher of the Elect[3] If anyone speaks or makes (deep) consideration (he knows that) the Maker's works are not to be counted The (supporting) "Bull" is Righteousness the son of Kindness, who maintains patience by means of rectitude[4]—if anyone understands (this), then he becomes enlightened.[5] What a weight upon the "Bull"! More worlds, more and more beyond! What kind of support is under all that weight (N. *Japji*, 16: 1-12)?

2. (There are) creatures of (many) species, kinds and names; all have been written with a flowing pen, but few know (how) to write

[1] *panca lit* "the five" In a village the five chief men formed a sort of village council, the *pancāyat*, and so the word gained the sense of chosen leaders Sikh commentators explain that the "Elect" are those who day and night always keep God lovingly in their minds The stage of *nidhidhyāsan*, contemplation

[2] *pance sohahi dari rājānu*

[3] They need no outer teacher but find all truth within.

[4] *santokhu thāpi rakhiā jini sūti* "rectitude", *or* "the order of nature".

[5] *saciāru, i e*, imbued with the eternally true

the list, (and if) the list were written how vast it would be! How great (God's) power and beauty of form, how great (His) gifts, who knows (how) to guess? So great a universe from one Word, whence lakhs of rivers have been formed! What power have I to imagine (Thee)! I cannot (even) once surrender (truly to Thee)! What pleases Thee, that work is good; O Formless One, Thou abidest everlastingly[1] (N *Japji*, 16: 13-24)!

3 Countless (persons) pray[2] and countless (do acts of) love, countless worship and countless (perform) austerities, countless read scriptures and Vedas aloud, (while) countless yogis remain mentally detached, countless devotees ponder on (God's) glories and (His) wisdom Countless are the generous and countless the givers, countless the heroes facing steel, countless the silent ones[3] concentrating love (on Thee)! What power have I to imagine (Thee)? I cannot (even) once surrender (truly to Thee)! What pleases Thee,

[1] This refrain, repeated four times, once with the omission of the first clause, runs *kudarati kavana kahā vicāru / vārıā na jāvā eka vāra / jo tudhu bhāvai sāī bhalikāra / tū sadā salāmati nirankāra //*

[2] *asankha japa*. or countless repetitions (of the Name)

[3] *monī*

that work is good, O Formless One, Thou abidest everlastingly (N. *Japji*, 17)!

4 Countless the fools totally blind, countless the thieves robbing others' property, countless those who depart after a violent reign, countless the slayers who commit murder, countless the sinners who depart after committing crimes, countless the liars who wander in falsehood, countless the barbarians who devour filthy food,[1] countless the slanderers taking a load upon the head![2] Lowly Nanak[3] expresses (this) opinion: "I cannot (even) once surrender (truly to Thee)! What pleases Thee, that work is good; O Formless One, Thou abidest everlastingly (N *Japji*, 18)!"

5 Countless the names and countless the places,[4] countless the worlds altogether out of reach; "Countless", they say, (but) on (their) heads is a load (for the word is inadequate)

[1] *asankha malecha malu bhakhi khāhi*

[2] *Cf* §§ 4 2, 36 1

[3] *Nānaku nīcu*, *cf* §3 3 It is only his humility makes the Guru use this language, he does not wish to seem self-righteous in criticising others

[4] *asankha nāva asankha thāva* Teja Singh points out that the Guru here teaches God has many, not 99 or 108 or even 1000, names (cf GH 9 4), and that to Him all places are sacred, not only places like Mecca, Banaras, Jerusalem, Rome or Talwandi

(Yet) by words (we speak His) Name, by words (His) praise, by words (His) wisdom, hymns and depths of goodness; by words are the writing and speaking of the Utterance, and the destiny is expressed on the head in words. But nothing is (on) His head who wrote this,[1] and as He ordains, so exactly do (souls) receive. As much as (He) has made, so much is the Name;[2] there is no place without the Name.[3] What power have I to imagine (Thee)? I cannot (even) once surrender (truly to Thee)! What pleases Thee, that work is good, O Formless One, Thou abidest everlastingly (N. *Japji*, 19)!

It is the Saints who as God's messengers carry the burden of the universe, who rule the worlds from within, and are trusted by their Lord In that universe there are numberless worlds—how could they all be upheld by the fabled Bull of old mythology, any more than by the earlier Tortoise? No, the real "Bull" which supports the worlds is only that eternal Law of infinite Justice born of Mercy, the Law of Karma; this maintains all creation, and it is through the study of its

[1] *Cf* *Ar Bawan Akhari*, 54, all but God is describable by words

[2] A clear definition of the "Name" as the whole creation which reveals God, other passages show that it includes also revelation through Scripture

[3] As God is everywhere revealed, so we can everywhere find Him This important passage reads, *jetā kītā tetā nāu / vinu nāvaī nāhī ko thāu //*

workings the soul can win to real wisdom and the understanding of God's infinite Will That will is not arbitrary or haphazard, but it is the creative keynote of the universe sounding on the keyboard of each soul, it is the *Asha* taught by the Prophet Zarathushtra through the great *Ahunavairya-mantra*, the Law of Righteousness, the Great Plan, which gradually raises every individual through fluctuating fortunes to the height where ego cannot survive, it falls away, and leaves him free to enter God's holy Court

Who indeed can number the countless beings of innumerable kinds that God has made? How infinite must He be who with a single utterance of His Will produced all these! Imagination falls back baffled from all attempts to realise His greatness, and cannot for a moment pay Him worthy homage, it is enough for us to accept gladly whatever He may send to us, knowing it must be always for our good.

Endless beings adore Him and try to do His will, each in his own way, spiritual or material, many are devoted to study or to ceremonial rites, many turn to silent contemplation, while others lavish gifts upon the needy in His Name and for His sake, many bravely suffer martyrdom for Him, while others only "stand and wait", the unknown faithful ones who keep God's flag flying in the privacy of their own homes.

But without the "villain" there can be no long play, so many maintain the Drama of life by opposing these righteous souls, by their own wicked deeds of violence and filth they corrupt the world, these too serve Him by drawing into play the patience and hidden virtues and courage of His saints

Even the word "countless" conveys no real sense of the number of beings in God's universe, no word can convey such a thought, yet we must use words to suggest ideas and feelings to each other, even though

they be altogether inadequate We use words even to speak of God, who is beyond all that any words can suggest, who cannot be limited by anything that words convey He IS, yes, and He is the Giver of all, the absolute Sovereign of all, who governs all by His Will silently revealed by creation, and which we call the "Name", eternally omnipresent

61. God's Name Alone can Purify

1 If the hand, foot or trunk (of) the body are dirty, they are washed with water and the dirt is removed, (when) the clothes are soiled with dirt, soap is applied and they are washed clean,[1] (so if) the mind is defiled by contact with sins, they can be washed away by the love of the Name "Meritorious" and "Sinner" are not (mere) words, whatever acts you may perform you record and take along (with you),[2,3] (you) yourself sow, (you) yourself also eat, Nanak, at (God's) command you come and go (N *Japji*, 20)

[1] *mūta palītī kapalu hoi / de sābūnu laīai ohu dhoi /|*

[2] *kari kari karanā likhi lai jāhu* We notice how often the Guru recurs to the law of Karma, both Hindus and Muslims at the time relied too much on ceremonial purity and external credalism, and it was necessary to insist on the purely ethical nature of the hereafter as taught by Zarathushtra

[3] as *sanskāras*, which may produce another birth in the world

2. If anyone has (visits to) holy places, austerities, kindnesses and charitable gifts, he (has only) tiny merit,[1] (if he) listens to, honours and loves (the Name) in the heart, he bathes thoroughly in the holy waters within[2] (O God,) all goodness is Thine, I am nothing; unless (Thou) make virtue (in me) there can be no devotion[3] (to Thee)! Hail to (Thee), Creative Power, Word and Creator, eternal Beauty in (whose) heart is always Love[4] (N. *Japji*, 21. 1-8)!

Material things can be cleansed with soap and water, but what can these do to wash away the stains of sin from the heart? The only remedy for impurity is Purity, the only purifier of the heart is God Himself, revealed and glorified by His holy Name, just as the only solvent for the fat of wickedness is the soap of piety It is folly to undervalue virtue or to make light of sin; sin is not a mere abstraction but a heavy load which, pressing on the soul, prevents its ascension to God's Court The foul and filthy cannot enter there—if they were taken in they would hurl themselves out again at once, unable to bear its radiance and its awful purity—and those who play with sin slam its door upon

[1] *tila kā mānu*, i e, "the honour of a til-seed", which is very small

[2] *Cf* §47 2

[3] It is God's grace which alone can call a soul to devotion

[4] *suasti āthi bānī baramāu / sati suhānu sadā mani cāu //* The word *āthi* is understood as *māyā-prakṛti*, to use a Skt expression

their own faces. Who but themselves can be blamed for that?

Material remedies cannot avail for spiritual needs, nor can outer deeds of piety wholly wash away the inner corruption past sin has caused. It is only the "water of life" which wells up within the heart from the infinite source within—the constant loving thought of God, the Fount of Holiness—that can really purify within. God is Spirit, and only Spirit can purify our spiritual bodies. Of ourselves we are indeed nothing, and that is the climax of human knowledge, but with God we can do all things, and the greatest thing anyone can do is to make an act of whole surrender to His love (*Islām*). No sin can survive that surrender, the heart is washed wholly clean by the tide of faith and love.

62. God's Goodness

1. Which was the moment, which the time, which the date and which the weekday,[1] which was the season and which the month wherein the (universe) took shape?[2] The Pandits did not get the (exact) moment or it would have been written in a Purana; the Qazis did not find out the time or they would have recorded it in writing in the Quran.[3] No

[1] *suvclā*, auspicious time for starting something, *vakhatu* the Arabic word *waqt*, which means simply "time", *thiti* the Skt word for the day of the month, *vāra*, the Skt. word for the day of the week.

[2] *ākāra*, i.e., (visible) form.

[3] The Guru suitably uses the Skt. word when speaking of pundits and purānas, and the Arabic word when speaking of qāzis and the

Yogi knows the date (or) the weekday[1]—no one knows the season (or) the month; the Creator who made the universe, He Himself alone knows. How can I speak of,[2] how can I praise, how describe **or** know (Him)? Everyone tries to talk, each wiser than the other, (says) Nanak. Great is the Master, and great the Name whose making (is whatever) exists! Nanak, if anyone thinks "I myself (know)", when he has gone forward he does not shine (there)[3] (N. *Japji*, 21: 9-18).

2. Underworlds (below) underworlds in lakhs, skies (upon) skies![4] Indeed the Vedas say (only) one word:[5] "We are weary of seeking (their) limits!" (Other) books speak

Qur'ān. Of course the Qur'ān was not written by "Qāzis" but dictated by the Prophet when in the "mood" of inspiration and later compiled into a book by the learned.

[1] To yogis all kinds of wonderful powers and knowledge are attributed, but not even the greatest of yogis has given us this information.

[2] *Kiva kari ākhā*.

[3] There have been those who pretended to such high knowledge but in the next world when men are seen as they are we shall know them to have spoken in the pride of their own ignorance.

[4] This saying is said to have roused the ire of certain orthodox Muslims who thought Nanak was contradicting the Qur'ān, which speaks only of Hell, Earth and Heaven; the Guru is said to have given them a vision of some of these many "planes" or worlds.

[5] *or* fact (*vāta*)

of eighteen thousand,[1] (whose) Root is the One eternal Creator. Could there be a list, (they) would write (it down), but they would perish in the writing[2] Nanak, they say "Great!", (but) He alone knows Himself (N *Japji*, 22)!

3 The praisers praise (but) have gained no such[3] realisation (of Him); rivers and streams enter the sea (but) do not know (what it is) Kings and Emperors of the oceans may have mountains of property and wealth,[4] but are not equal to the ant whose heart forgets Thee not (N. *Japji*, 23)!

4. No end (of His) praises, no end of telling (them); no end (of His) works, no end (of His) gifts, no end by seeing, no end by hearing, none can find the end of plans in (His) mind[5] No one (can) see[6] an end of the created universe, nor see the limits of (that) end How many have been distressed

[1] This number is quoted by T as given in Bh Kahna's *Gauri* hymns I do not know of any place where it is in the "Western scriptures", referred to, we are told, by the word *kateba* here It is not in the Bible or Qur'ān, but may be in some lost apocryphon

[2] *lekhai hoi vināsu* They would not live long enough to finish

[3] *i e*, such as to know how great He is

[4] *samunda sāha sulatāna girahā setī mālu dhanu*

[5] *antu na jāpai kiā mani mantu*

[6] *japji*, it is S who thus translates this word by *dissadā*, T reads "find out", which is substantially the same

in (trying to) make out the boundary, but they could find no end to Him—no one can (ever) know that end! The more you say, the more there is (unsaid)! Great is the Master, lofty (His) abode, and higher than the high is (His) Name; were any (other) to be so great, he would be able to know the height of Him Himself (alone) is so great, (so) He Himself alone knows; Nanak, gifts[1] are from the kindness of the Gracious One (N. *Japji*, 24)!

5 So many are (His) kindnesses (that) they cannot be written, (but) the great Giver has not a particle of desire.[2] How many peerless warriors ask (of Him)! How many (whose) number is not to be thought of! How many break by needlessly ruining (themselves)![3] How many receive and receive, and (then) deny! How many fools (merely) eat and eat! How many are always stricken with sorrow and hunger—but even these are (also) Thy gifts, O Giver! Freedom from bondage comes

[1] including the gift of knowing Him whom we cannot of ourselves perceive

[2] *i e*, for gratitude or acknowledgement

[3] *kete khapi tutahi vekāra* T has "wreck themselves with self-indulgence"

at (Thy) pleasure,[1] no one can say more If any fool tries to speak (of another way), then he knows how many (blows) he endures on the face! He Himself knows (our needs), He Himself gives—(though) very few even admit this Nanak, he to whom (God) grants the gift of praise is a King of Kings (N *Japji*, 25)!

No human mind can reach behind the hour of its creation to know exactly when and how it was, so God's secrets are not revealed even in the world's noblest scriptures, they are known to God alone For all man's airy philosophies, for all the words he pours out in lecture-halls, he knows very little of the truth, those who claim to know it in all its fullness only deceive themselves and will be exposed in the next world as the impostors they really are God alone knows all

There is no limit to the worlds, nor could any complete list be made of them all, though the Puranas may tell their number, theirs is but a symbolic guess Infinite is His creation—who then can say what He Himself must be? It is enough for us to adore, we can no more hope to comprehend than the salt doll can understand the nature and the size of the sea it enters However great the greatest of mankind, they are but insects before the humblest soul who is really devoted to the Lord

The more we speak of Him, the less we know, for we surround ourselves with a dense fog of egoism,

[1] There is no way to liberation save through God's grace and guidance

those who know are awed to reverent silence in His presence. God's "boundlessness" is but a word to us, for to understand it we must see the bound and know He goes beyond, but where is the boundary for Him to go beyond? He is in all, endless and eternal, infinite and unthinkable. Only those on a level with its top can see the height of a tree, and only those like God could measure His greatness, but there is *none* like God, He IS, alone and secondless. What little we can know of Him is only what of His mercy He reveals to us. It is when He takes us to Himself and sets us free from human limitations that we shall know Him as we know ourselves.

He has nothing to gain from us, no defect to be made good, no desire to be gratified, He just gives, unceasingly, to all who turn to Him. He feels no pain when the recipients ignore Him and deny His gifts, for He is equally in them as well. He gives all, both joy and sorrow, each as may be best for each of us, and as soon as we can bear to be wholly free He releases us from the bonds of ignorance. It is only He who gives: there is no other mediator, there is none but God to whom we can turn. He knows our real needs far better than we ourselves can know them, and He gives before we even ask. Nothing can make us happier than to be grateful to this all-generous Lord of ours.

63. His Glory Excels all Thought

1. Priceless[1] is goodness,[2] priceless the trading (in it), priceless are the dealers and

[1] The key-word of the first two paragraphs is *amulu*, and of the third is *ākhaṇu*.

[2] *guna*, one of the many words for which no single English equivalent is satisfactory: it connotes qualities, good qualities, virtues, glories.

priceless the storehouse (of it), priceless the bringers (of it) and priceless the takers away,[1] priceless (those) in love and priceless (those) absorbed (in it) (N *Japji*, 26· 1-4).

2 Priceless is the Law [2] and priceless the Court, priceless the scales and priceless the weights, priceless the pardon [3] and priceless the sign (of it), priceless (God's) mercy and priceless the decree [4]—beyond all pricelessness and indescribable, guessing and guessing, (men) remain lost in ecstasy [5] (N *Japji*, 26: 5-10)!

3 The texts of Vedas and Puranas [6] talk,[7] scholars talk and deliver sermons, creators talk and Indras [8] talk, Gopis talk and Govindas

[1] Guru Nanak shows in his hymns many such memories of the days in his own youth when his parents tried to drive him into commercial business

[2] *dharamu*, i e , the law of righteousness, ethics, religion, duty

[3] *bakhasīsa*, to be distinguished from *karamu* in the next verse, it stands rather for "acquittal", while the latter implies "forgiveness", "mercy"

[4] *furmānu*, i e , the sentence of the Court, in this case favourable

[5] *amulo amulu ākhiā na jāi / ākhi ākhi rahe liva lāi //*

[6] Most scriptures contain hymns and laws like the Vedas, and histories and parables and doctrines like the Puranas, so these two words may stand for all the world's scriptures

[7] The key-word of the first two paragraphs is *amulu*, and of the third is *ākhahi*

[8] *Indras*, the word may be taken as a symbol of worldly rulers

talk,[1] Lords [2] talk and Adepts talk, how many created Buddhas [3] talk! Demons talk, gods talk, divine men, silent sages and servants! [4] How many talk (or) try to talk! How many talk and talk (till) they die! [5] Wert Thou to make as many more as have (already) been made, even then not even one would be able to utter it all! (God) becomes as great as He pleases, Nanak, only the Eternal knows (how great He is); if any babbler begins to talk, then write (him down as) the fool of fools [6] (N *Japji*, 26: 11-26).

Blessed indeed is devotion and blessed those who gain it, those who share it with others, all who have anything to do with it For the devotee enriches, saves the world, the very sound of a hymn to God, even from afar, uplifts the hearts of all who hear (cf GN 30 2 etc).

[1] *Gopis* and *Govindas*, *i e*, the givers and receivers of devotion

[2] *Isara*, Skt *Iśwara*, *i e*, the rulers of world systems under the One

[3] *Budha*, *i e*, enlightened (men), real Gnostics of the highest order

[4] *ākhai suri nara muni jana seva*

[5] *kete kahi kahi uthi uthi jāhi*, *i e*, get up and go off

[6] *je ko ākhai bolu vigālu | tā likhiai siri gavārā gavāru* Guru Nanak, like many of our own day, grew weary of the philosophy-spinners who spend their time in idle words instead of living and doing some good in the world

Perfect indeed is the justice of God's Law which upholds His universe, we can rely with absolute confidence on that judgment which awaits each human soul —for each will get exactly what he has earned, or needs, of joy or sorrow And who can tell how precious, how delightful that moment of His grace, when He pardons all our sins and pours His love into our hearts to make us wholly His, the very thought of that perfect blending of Justice and Mercy cannot but throw us into a trance of wondering love!

Again and again His creatures try to express what they perceive of Him and of His vast universe, but it is all in vain They may pass whole lives in the effort, but He remains ever beyond the reach of language, and it is only foolishness for the finite to try to define the Indefinable, the Infinite—folly and the grossest of impiety

64. The Splendour of His Majesty

1. What [1] is that door,[2] what is that house where sitting Thou watchest (over) all; [1] many and countless tunes are (there) played by so many musicians—how many singers sing according to the (various) types and modes [3] (of music) (N *Japji*, 27: 1-3)!

[1] The word *kehā* suggests an exclamation of wonder almost, "How wonderful is that door, that house!" *So daru kehā, so gharu kehā, jitu bahi saraba samāle* The last word suggests "protectest" (*sambhāl karnā*)

[2] It is the "tenth door of the sky", which leads to God's Heaven

[3] *rāga* *rāgini*, the former almost corresponds to the Wagnerian *motif*.

2 To Thee Wind, Water, Fire do sing,[1] the King of Justice sings at the door (of Thy Court), the Recorders [2] sing (who) know (how) to write all (acts and thoughts), and as they write and write Justice considers! Iswara and the Creator sing, the Goddesses, always adorned with beauty,[3] (many) divine Kings seated on thrones [4] among the gods sing at the door!

3 Adepts sing in (their) ecstatic trance,[5] good men sing in meditation,[6] zealous ascetics sing in (their) perseverance,[7] unyielding heroes sing (to Thee)! Pundits and great Seers [8] sing (while) reading the Vedas from age to age; beauties sing who charm (all) hearts in

[1] The key-word of this section is *gāvahi*, they sing

[2] *citu gupatu, i e*, Chitragupta, the *Karma-lipika* of Theosophists The name is suggestive of "hidden or secret mind", reminding us that the inmost motives have most effect on character and so on destiny

[3] *gāvahi Isaru Barama devī sohani sadā savāre*

[4] *lit* on Indra-thrones

[5] *gāvahi sidha samādhī andari* *Samadhi* is the state of absolute moveless poise, wherein all fluctuations of the mind cease and the consciousness is merged in the blissful Object of its devotion

[6] *gāvani sādha vicāre*, the *sadhu* is one who practises spirituality and engages in frequent meditation upon the Real

[7] *gāvani jatī sati santokhī* the *jati* is one who exercises strong self-control and by various mortifications subdues the passions and the mind.

[8] *rakhīsara, i e*, lords of Rsis.

heaven, earth and the underworld, the jewels[1] made by Thee sing together with the sixty-eight holy places, mighty warriors and heroes sing (to Thee), the four "kingdoms"[2] (of living beings) sing, the planes, systems and universes[3] which Thou art (ever) making and sustaining (More than this), to Thee sing those who please Thee, devotees saturated with the sweet love of Thee, and how many more sing they do not come to my mind—what is Nanak to think[4] (N *Japji*, 27: 8-16)?

4 He and He alone is ever true, the eternal Master of eternal Name, He indeed is and (ever) shall be, He goes not, nor shall go,[5] who has created (all) creation, who produced Nature, making and making, (with its) many colours, kinds and types;[6] as He makes and makes He watches His own handiwork so that He (may see and enjoy) its greatness.

[1] The jewels are the virtues which arise in the mind through the brooding on God's holy Name

[2] *i.e.*, those born from seed, sweat, mud and eggs

[3] *khanda mandala varabhandā*, or continents, worlds and universes

[4] *kete kete gāvani se maī citi na āvani, Nānak kiā vicāre*

[5] *hai bhī hosī jāi na jāsī*, there is nothing here about God being born or not born, it speaks only of His eternity

[6] *rangī rangī bhātī kari kari jinasī māyā jini upāī*

What pleases Him, that He will do, (our) order can do nothing He is the King, nay, the very King of Kings; Nanak, (it is right) to remain resigned[1] (to Him) (N *Japji*, 27:17-21)!

In fancy Nanak now throws himself before God's judgment seat, before the gate of His "diwān", where He attends to petitions and administers the universe The perfection of His Law and the immanence of happiness in all—as a blissful play—is delicately suggested by the music there, the "harmony" of the spheres spoken of by Hermes (GH 3, 29, 36) All around is the rejoicing of sweet melody, for all there is peace, and in the absence of injustice no fear can arise God knows all, and He is on the throne, and He is perfectly good The angel-recorders of men's acts and thoughts assess (*cf* GI 49, GZ 38), the "King of Righteousness" (Rājā Dharamu), *i e*, Death, is judge and perfectly administers God's laws, while the whole universe rejoices in the doom of evil, the apotheosis of God's devotee How can poor Nanak describe that scene? The whole universe, with all its gods, is there.

He who made all and knows all, rules all and does all, nor is there anything He has not willed in all this vast boundless universe Our happiness, our righteousness, our glory lies in simply accepting His sweet Will as manifested in whatever comes to us, glad equally in joy and pain

65. Adoration to the Eternal

1. Make Perseverance (your) earrings, Effort (your) bowl and pouch, Contemplation

[1] *Nānaka rahanu rajāī* The summation of all true religion, "*Islām*", surrender, ātmā-nivedanam

(your) ash,[1] the Readiness for Death (your) quilted coat,[2] perfect Chastity (your) body, and Faith (your) Staff; (let) universal Brotherhood (be your) Āī-order [3]—(for) to conquer in the heart is to conquer the world [4] Adoration, adoration to Him, the Immaculate [5] Source, beginningless and endless,[6] in age after age the (one) same Form [7] (N. *Japji*, 28)!

2 (Make) Wisdom [8] (your) sweetmeat,[9] Kindness the steward,[10] (hearing) the sound

[1] The yogi would do well to make contentment, endurance, patience his adornment, honest hard work should replace in his life the mere beggar's bowl, and the constant brooding on God the mere outward sign of renunciation and of "death to the world" symbolised by the ashes smeared on his body

[2] T reads this "gaberdine" a long flowing robe worn by a yogi to appear like his own shroud, it was made of different patches of cloth, thickened by cotton-wool as in the *razāī* of North India

[3] *āī-panthī*, the Āī-sect was considered the highest order of sannyasis noted for toleration, instead of taking pride in his order the real yogi will look on all men as his equals and mingle freely with all (The phrase here is *sagalā jamātī*, and compares with the teaching in §§ 27 2, 28 and 30)

[4] *mani jītai jagu jītu*, one of Guru's precious epigrams, containing in the fewest possible words the greatest possible wisdom-revelation

[5] *anīlu*, colourless, and so pure, unstained

[6] *anāhati*, imperishable, undying

[7] This refrain, which recurs at the end of each paragraph in the section, runs thus *ādesu tisai ādesu / ādi anīlu anādi anāhati / jugu jugu eko vesu //* The word *ādesu* is explained as a greeting equivalent to prostration and implying a willingness to obey any order given by the greeted

[8] *or* Gnosis, *i e*, the direct realisation of God, which implies love

[9] *bhugati*, *lit* what is enjoyed, *i e*, food which gives pleasure

[10] *or* treasurer, storekeeper (*bhandārani*)

of music in every bosom;[1] (let) Him (be) the Lord to whom all belongs, and wealth and psychic powers (be) titbits for others;[2] both Attraction and Repulsion[3] (so) act on things (that) the written destiny comes (to each) Adoration, adoration to Him, the Immaculate Source, beginningless and endless, in age after age the (one) same Form (N *Japji*, 29)!

3. One Mother united (with God) became pregnant and gave birth to three sons:[4] one the Householder, one the Provider, one the Judge[5] As it pleases Him, so He directs according as (His) decree may be; He watches (all, yet) the look of grace does not reach them[6]—very marvellous is this! Adoration, adoration to Him, the Immaculate Source,

[1] The horn sounded by yogis to announce their coming is to be the sound of the "voice of the silence" heard in every living being, i e, the realisation of God as immanent in all, (*ghati ghati vājahi nāda*)

[2] *āpi nāthu nāthī sabha jākī ridhi sidhi avarā sāda*

[3] *lit* joining (and) separation (*sanjogu vijogu*)

[4] *celo*; the word usually means "disciple"

[5] *samsārī bhandārī lāe dibānu* Siva is here described as the one who "summons the court", i e, brings all things to account and closes the record

[6] i e, He sees them, yet they do not see Him

beginningless and endless, in age after age the (one) same Form (N *Japji*, 30)!

4 (His) seat and storehouse are in every world, whatever He has found (there) was (found) at one time;[1] making and making, the Creator watches (His creation)[2]—Nanak, eternal is the work of the Eternal! Adoration, adoration to Him, the Immaculate Source, beginningless and endless, in age after age the (one) same Form (N *Japji*, 31)!

Surrender to God is the only *real* yoga, which unites our will to His and makes us one form with Him, and not the assuming of showy outward signs and insignia Let us then replace these with inward virtues of the heart with endurance, honest work, mental effort, the readiness to meet life's "end" at any moment, purity and confidence, together with the humility of being absolutely accessible to all as an equal and a friend For this is the greatest victory man can win, and these are the real *siddhis* or perfections for which he must strive, self-conquest is the highest of dominions, the hardest and the most delightful to achieve

Nanak now turns from the homeless ascetic to the householder's kitchen the true knowledge of God is to

[1] So most commentators, T reads "He put in once for all whatever He had to place in them" The meaning is similar

[2] The Guru often insists on God's work being unending, so those who seek union with Him cannot look for eternal idleness hereafter

be served out to all as the sweetest titbit of the feast for guests, while outsiders may seek the childish bauble of psychic powers if they will. It is right there should be these two parties in the world, the spiritual and the worldly, the Law of Harmony is a delicate balance between the two, attraction and repulsion together hold the worlds in place and make evolution possible on them, between them the "devas" and the "asuras" churn the milk-ocean whence arise nectar and so many other things, both demoniac and divine. It is kindness and compassion for others which awakens in the heart God's soft voice, and this leads us at last to full surrender and so to union with Him.

Māyā-Śakti is the "mother" of our triune universe which is symbolised by Brahma-Vishnu-Siva, Creator-Maintainer-Absorber, and the three qualities of *rajas-sattva-tamas*, Activity-Rhythm-Passivity. It is Brahma who builds the "house" or "heart", it is Vishnu who pervades all and gives all, and Siva who assures perfect justice to all, and these Three are really only "sons" or "disciples" of the real God, who is above and beyond Them all, ruling through Them all the worlds, and calling one here, one there, into union with Him.

Indeed, all His worlds are even now in Him, and He dwells in them—as the sea is in each wave and each wave in the sea, for He is everywhere, incessantly at work, omniscient, omnipotent. And they who enter into union with Him will share for all eternity in that ceaseless work, having at their disposal the same infinitely extended powers as He. Wise indeed are they who see Him and adore Him as the ever-Changeless, in whom all else exists in ever-changing forms, who pattern their own being so that it may truly reflect His, and enable them to share His infinite bliss of endless work for the uplift of all that is!

66. All Power is in Him

1 (A man says), "If from one tongue a lakh[1] were to come into being, and from the lakh twenty lakhs were to appear—I would call lakhs and lakhs of times on the one Name of the Lord of the World; in this way would I climb the Bridegroom's (five) stairs[2] and become one (with Him); on hearing talk of the sky, a longing comes (even) to worms!" Nanak, He is obtained through grace, false are (such) boastful falsehoods[3] (N *Japji*, 32)!

2 In speaking (we have) no power, no power in keeping silence,[4] no power in asking, no power in giving, no power in living, no power in dying, no power (in getting) kingdom or wealth which thrill the heart, no power (in attaining) intelligence, wisdom (or) meditation, no power to reach the escape (from) the world, He in whose hand the power is, is He who makes and watches (all), Nanak, no one

[1] *lakh*, the common Indian word for a hundred thousand, a hundred lakhs make one crore (*koti*)

[2] *etu rāhi pati pavaliā chaliai*, this "ladder" or "staircase" consists of the five stages of spiritual life, whereof the lowest is on this physical world

[3] *nadari pāīai kūli kūlai thīsa*

[4] *ākhani joru cupai naha joru* cf §55 2

is noble or mean (by his own effort alone) (N. *Japji*, 33)

3 Nights, seasons, dates, weekdays, wind, water, fire, the under-worlds—amidst these has He established the Earth (as) an inn,[1] wherein (there are) living beings or habits and colours whose names are many and endless. According to the actions (these) perform, so is the verdict, He Himself is just, and true (is His) Court, there the Elect are glorified and through (His) look of grace win the mark of favour; there the imperfect and the mature are distinguished [2] (from each other) Nanak, on going (there) it comes to be known (what each one is) (N *Japji*, 34)

At this stage the devotee may burst out in a song of ecstasy that even if he had millions and millions of tongues he would devote them all to the ceaseless adoration of that wonderful God, Vahiguru, keeping His Name ever on them all So he would pass easily upward through the five stages or planes of the spiritual path to union with Him, all by his own effort and devotion It is natural for man to long for this, does not every creature, even the lowliest, desire to rise to higher things—the caterpillar dreams of wings that it may fly—and what is higher than the Lord?

[1] *dharamasāla*, properly used for a building set apart for the free use of travellers and pilgrims for a night or so

[2] *kaca pakāī othai pāi*, lit the raw and cooked there are found (out)

But Nanak pulls us up sharply here There is only one way to reach God, and that is through His grace Man in his foolish pride thinks he can do everything by himself, he invents so many creeds, relies on sacrifice, on intercession, on gifts, austerity, intellectual subtleties—but none of these can take the soul to God, any doctrine, any philosophy, which omits the omnipotence of grace is false

Of ourselves alone we can do nothing at all, even in this world of ours we depend absolutely on God. How then could we imagine we could come to His transcendent world and merge with Him by our own effort? Can the man fallen into mud pull himself out by tugging at his own hair? He alone has power, He alone can do what He will, He alone can save the fallen.

This Earth of ours on which we live today in physical bodies is the Plane of Law and Righteousness, a *dharmśāla* indeed, and also in its second sense an inn, for none of us stay here long, we come, meet strangers here, and pass upon our way (cf §22:1) Those who act righteously in that brief sojourn, as guided by conscience and the Guru's teaching, are approved by God in the "judgment" after death and receive His award in that court all will know the real character of every soul, for no deception avails against the spirit's penetrating gaze This physical world, the *Dharama-khand*, lies between the subtler elemental world and the grosser planes of *Pātāla*; it is ruled by Time and Space under the control of the Lord and His Saints, the "Elect"

67. The Path to the Real

1. Such is the law of the Plane of Law;[1] (now) speak[2] of the action of the Plane of

[1] *dharama khanda kā eho dharamu*

[2] *ākhahu*, some read this as "I will tell"

Wisdom. How many winds, waters, fires! How many Krishnas and Sivas![1] How many Creators shaping forms of (various) beauties, colours and shapes![2] How many fields of action,[3] how many mountain summits (of contemplation), how many teachings from Dhruva![4] How many planets[5] and moons, how many suns, how many habitable spheres![6] How many Adepts and Buddhas, how many Masters, how many goddess-robes![7] How many gods and demons, how many sages, how many (kinds) and oceans of gems! How many races,[8] how many languages, how many

[1] *kete Kāna Mahesa.* *Kāna* stands for *Kanhaiya*, a name of Sri Krishna, and *Mahesa* is the Skt. *Maheśvara*, the Great Lord.

[2] *kete Barame ghalati ghaṛiahi rūpa ranga ke vesa.*

[3] *karama bhūmi*, *i.e.*, lands of action, or grace, *i.e.*, worlds.

[4] *kete Dhu upadesa.* Dhruva was a five-years boy whom Narada taught full devotion to the Lord; he assumed rule over the Polar Star, round which the universe we know revolves. Thus the Guru here means "How many teachings of Divine wisdom which control the worlds and guide its beings!"

[5] lit. *Indras* (*inda*), *i.e.*, worldly divine kings. So I have understood the meaning as "planets", a word which seems to fit in the context.

[6] *mandala desa*, *i.e.*, spheres (and) lands. I have taken it as hendiadys for "inhabited spheres" because *desa* (Skt. *desam*) implies habitants.

[7] *devī vesa.* S. has proved that *kete* here goes with *vesa* and not with *devi*, so *devi* must be used almost adjectivally.

[8] *khāṇi*, or *mines*, *i.e.*, sources from which human souls are quarried.

emperors and kings![1] How many (kinds of) contemplation,[2] how many servants (of God) —Nanak, no end to them (N *Japji*, 35)!

2. In (that) plane of Wisdom Wisdom is supreme; there is the joy of music, of spectacles and plays[3] (But) Beauty is the note of the Plane of Effort, and there most exquisite forms are fashioned—the facts of that (state) cannot be told, if anyone (tries to) tell he afterwards repents Intuition and Understanding are moulded there, and Discrimination (awakes) in the heart,[4] it is there the awarenesses of Gods and Adepts are formed (N. *Japji*, 36)

3. The keynote of the Plane of Grace is Power, no one is there[5] save warriors mighty and brave, in whom God is everywhere pervading[6] Sita upon Sita is there in

[1] *kete pāta narinda*, some read this ' How many royal dynasties! "

[2] *ketiā suratī* S shows this to be fem plu We may prefer " How many (kinds of) intelligence! "

[3] *tithai nāda binoda koda anandu*, S understands *kautak* for koda, while T reads it as *koti* " crores ", M and U agree with T Prof Jodh Singh reads " and numerous forms of happiness "

[4] *tithai ghatiai surati mati mani budhi*

[5] *tithai horu na koi horu* it may be better to read this " There is no other thing there (save Power) "

[6] *tina mahi Rāmu rahiā bharapūra*

glory,[1] whose beauty cannot be described They will never die nor be misled (by Māyā) in whose hearts God dwells; many worlds of devotees live there rejoicing (because) the Eternal is in (their) heart (N *Japji*, 37: 1-10).

4 In the Plane of Reality dwells the Formless One, making and making, He watches with delightful look of grace Planes, worlds and universes are there—if one were to (begin) telling (them), then (he would find) no end of them! Worlds upon worlds of living forms—exactly as (His) command (may be) so exactly (is their) work![2] He watches, and is pleased while making meditation (on them all), Nanak, to describe (such things) is (as) hard as iron[3] (N *Japji*, 37: 11-18)!

Nanak sketches the way home through the four inner planes of life First, the Plane of Wisdom, known to many of us as "the Hall of Learning", the subtle world of profusion which fills with delighted wonder so many souls who enter it through the gate of death It is the source of countless inspirations, of archetypal forms, of primal beauties, of melodies destined to enter musicians' minds on earth and there to find a partial

[1] It has been pointed out that here the Guru shows the greatness of women, for where the perfect man is named, women too have a rightful place

[2] *tithai loa loa ākāra jiva jia hukamu tivai tiva kāra*

[3] *i e*, extremely hard to tell, (*kathanā karalā sāru*)

incarnation as immortal music among men, it is the realm of unnumbered beings built of "astral" or radiant matter, the "spirits" of the departed and of the unborn. Here are the elementals and the deities men worship at village shrines, the nature spirits that enform great mountains and rushing streams, the "invisible helpers" whose work was so well described from observation by C. W. Leadbeater, the builders of form and fairies, the "spirit-guides" and controls, Initiates, Masters and Adepts labouring among men on earth. Here through the manifold forms assumed by life the soul gradually learns to see the One, and so, in a realm palpitating with all human joys and delights, is slowly purged of ancient ignorance.

We pass on with our Guide to the next higher realm, the Plane of Happiness or of Effort, the *Sarama-khand*, where dwell the proto-forms of matchless beauty which have been the model for the workers in the lower plane. Hence originate the ideals and arche-types which workers in that *Gyāna-khand* transmit to artists on the earth—who try to translate those dreams of perfect form into great poems, noble buildings, symphonies or social reforms. Very subtle and easily moulded by thought is the matter of this plane, the "mental plane" of the Theosophists, and very great the joy of those who dwell thereon. The close association between joy and beauty is well brought out by Ruskin's saying quoted by Udhodas (p. 184): "Whatever is pleasurable, therefore, is also beautiful." And on this Plane of Effort, effort which leads to so great effects, it is natural that the dwellers there find it is a Plane of Happiness as well.

Further in, or up, we come to the Plane of Grace or Action—the meaning *Karama-khand* is disputed. Here there is no longer any concern for the fruits of action or success but solely for disinterested duty. This is wholly selfless, and so it is Godlike and draws us very

near to the glory of the all-pervading Rama and the beauteous Sita—types of perfected beings whose "life is hid in God", whose efforts can never be in vain or perish, nor can they be deceived by the false appearances of *māyā* Thus their actions are filled with omnipotent grace, everything they do is filled with the love and power of God This is the realm of those who are merged in God, the Great Ones who from time to time come forth to liberate men from the miseries spawned by ignorance, who are always labouring for us from their mountain summit of achievement

The Plane of Truth or Eternal Reality (*Saca-khand*) is God's own Home, where He alone abides in eternal bliss, because all who reach that plane are one with Him In that eternity the Past, Present and Future blend into an all-present Now, there is neither space nor time there, all is He alone He is the Absolute *Brahman* of whom the Hindus speak, the Formless One, whose qualities are so far beyond human thought that no word could be imagined to describe them, so we call Him the *Nirguna*, "without qualities". None can enter His Court save those who have been "at-oned", made one, with Him, for here there can be no "otherness"—here He IS, and from here He watches from His seat in the heart of every living thing all that He has made This is indeed a paradox, but how else can we speak of the infinite at all? There is no *time* for the Plane of Truth, for it has been, is and always will be *now* there is no *space* for the Plane of Truth, for it is not here or there but everywhere, within as without, being co-terminous with the Infinite Himself!

And so the soul rises, climbing the five steps of this "ladder" with the Guru's aid to his real home (cf §26 1). By the faithful and brave doing of his *duty* on earth he earns the right to knowledge and *wisdom*, and so is enabled to make happy *efforts* in the helping of others By this means he wins the *grace* of

the Saint, and so is led by him to union with the Beloved whom he has sought so long as the Final *Truth*

68. True Righteousness

1 Self-control is the smithy, Patience the smith,[1] Understanding the anvil, Wisdom the tools,[2] the Fear (of God) is the bellows, burning Austerity the fire, and Love the crucible wherein you melt the nectar[3]—in (this) true Mint the (Guru's) Word can be coined,[4] (and this is) the work of those on whom (falls) the grace of (His) glance Nanak, from grace upon grace (comes) bliss[5] (N. *Japji*, 38)

2 The Breath (of life) is the Guru, Water the father and great Earth[6] the mother, Day and Night[7] are the two nurses male and female[8]—the whole world plays (in their lap)!

[1] *jatu pāhārā dhiraju suniāru*

[2] *arahani mati vedu hathiāru* Note that the "wisdom" in this passage is not gnosis (*giānu*), but rather "thorough knowledge" (*vedu*)

[3] *nectar i e*, of God's Name

[4] The reader will, no doubt, enjoy working out the details of this striking metaphor

[5] *nadarī nadari nihāla*

[6] *dharati mahatu* in the latter word there may be an allusion to Skt *mahat*, one of the stages in evolution

[7] *i e*, life and death, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, etc

[8] *dui dāyi dāyā*

Justice reads out in (God's) presence the good and evil deeds (of men), and each according to his own actions (shall be)—some near (to Him and) some far off. Those who have brooded on the Name and achieved by effort, Nanak, are bright of face, how many are freed along with them. (N. *Sloka*)[1]

Nanak, in a few strong phrases has limned out the distant paths ahead of all, but he closes his great Hymn by bringing us right back to the practical side of life, which is not an empty dream of philosophy but a hard fight for right. He now gives us a few hints on the discipline needed by the aspirant before he can expect to tread that Path to the very end. he lists the qualifications which make up that discipline and must first be acquired. (1) Chastity and Self-control of body, mind and desires, (2) steady Perseverance in Effort, for the fickle and faint-hearted cannot travel far, (3) pure Reason, which must lie behind all true thinking and so illumine the mind with a sight of truth, (4) the essential Truths of all religions, (5) a Fearlessness which is born only from reverence for and faith in God, (6) the austere fire of Renunciation and spirituality, (7) the immortalising Love of God, (8) the Divine Name, which is the Guru's enlightening "Word", wherein the soul is melted into the form of the King, just as the metal of a coin is stamped with the sovereign's head. These are the qualities needed by the "metal", but it is the authority of the King alone which permits the coin to be struck, and that is Grace, as His grace pours down upon the soul it rises through the planes to Him.

The Japji concludes with a single *sloka* or stanza added by Nanak himself to remind us that good actions too are needed by man in his upward climb. Not works

alone, not Grace alone, but Grace enabling Works! And all the forces of Nature aid the man of grace who strives to live according to God's Word The child of soul (*water*) and body (*earth*) (cf. GH 3 4), Man has the breath of life breathed into him by the Guru, that breath is fostered by Time as he repeats the Name by day and night, and so he is enabled to use his opportunities for right action, he thus wins the great reward, earlier or later, here in this life or in the next Those who thus find the Lord become the teachers of others in their turn, for they share His eternal work of uplifting souls, they themselves "shine as the stars of heaven", and they spread radiance on the faces of all who come in touch with them

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Prayer

O true and eternal King, in Thy presence (we offer) the prayers of Sodaru and Rahiras; pardon (our) mistakes, (overcome our) difficulties and defects of letters, (let) the glorious name of Guru Nanak rise, and in Thy good pleasure (may there be) the good of all! (*Ardas*)

CORRIGENDA

We are indebted to Dr Ganda Singh for the following corrections in this book, mainly on questions of historical fact—wherein he is an undoubted authority, entitled to remedy errors of earlier scholars

p xxxviii line 1 *read* Chūharkānā

p xlii, line 4 *read* in Kāmarūp

p lvii, line 15 *read* Bhai Jodha

p lxi line 4 *read* Basarke

p lxiii, line 24 *read* Basarke

p lxviii, line 12 *read* of the Sodhi clan

pp. lxxvii-lxxviii Khusro received no special help from the Guru, but was an ordinary guest in the *langar* while passing through Goindwal This was misrepresented to the Emperor as sedition, but not by Chandu

p lxxxi, line 12 Guru Hargobind maintained an army on his own initiative and not on the orders of Guru Arjan

p ciii, line 24 *read* in the battle with Husain, a slave of Dilawar Khan

p cxii, lines 21-25 He had them most brutally buried alive, but when the wall fell down they were taken out unconscious and butchered on the third day by the professional executioners

p cxvi, line 8 *read* Jodhpur and Chitor (deleting Poona).

p cxix, line 6 *read* a pregnant doe

p cxx lines 3 to 16 Dr Ganda Singh says the whole of this statement, derived from earlier writers is unhistorical and would have it omitted

p cxx line 18 *read* Amingarh

p cxxiii line 26 *read* Basarke

p cxxiv, line 24 *read* Diwan Jaspat Rai

p cxxvi, last line *delete* to drive the Sikhs from Lahore

p cxxx lines 11-13 delete this half-sentence, which Dr Ganda Singh claims to be historically controversial

p cxxxiv, line 18 *read* at the Harike Ford

p cxxxv, line 19. *read* But Gough took command

p cxxxviii last 2 lines *delete* Under the inspiration of Raja Narendra Singh of Patiala (died 1862)

NOTE

We also thank the authorities of the Sikh Cultural Centre, who have taken great interest in this volume, for many kind suggestions, and apologise to them that the exigencies of type make it impossible for us to adopt all the changes they desire in the transliteration of Gurmukhi or to mark off as silent certain vowels at the end of many words These vowels are akin to those used at the end of Arabic words, which are written but not uttered in the common speech Those who know Gurmukhi pronunciation will have no difficulty in reading and understanding the forms as here printed; to those who do not, it is a matter of indifference

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